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Mission Statement

One of the prime factors for the emergence of Africanist sources on African history in the 19th century was the daylight fallacies European sources in particular concocted and relayed about African history. Some of their unfounded historical perspectives about Africa and her history included, first, that, Africa had no history before the advent of the Europeans on the continent. Secondly, that even if Africa had some form of history, such had nothing useful to offer to humanity and hence not worthy to be a subject matter of history. Other European sources, particularly those by their explorers, anthropologists, Christian missionaries, and colonial officials, among others, painted everything of African origin completely in gross bad light as being primitive, barbaric, and of no importance to constitute a part of world history. In addition, European sources did little or nothing to touch on key historical themes on African history such as the origins and migrations of people groups in Africa, state formation processes in Africa and the emergence and exploits of renowned African empires, kingdoms and state systems such as Ghana Empire, Mali Empire, Songhai Empire, Kanem-Bornu Empire, Oyo Empire, Benin Kingdom, the Hausa States, to mention but just few. The broad daylight fallacies concocted and transmitted in the aforementioned European sources rendered any effort to rely solely on European sources in the study of African history atmost an exercise in futility.

Very worrisomely, the predicament of the African historian to look elsewhere, especially to the Arab sources, to fill the gap became compounded due to several factors, prominent among which included the inherent deficiencies, also, in the Arab records on African history. Prominent among the deficiencies include the narrow-gauged approach adopted by the sources, which was too skeletal to also cover topical historical themes on African history, as mentioned earlier, in the case of European sources. Worse also is the fact that their early skeletal records did not go beyond the 9th and the 15th centuries, notwithstanding the fact that African history stretches across the entirety of human history.

Consequent upon the inherent deficiencies in both the Arab and European sources on African history, African historians were awakened, particularly, in the 20th century, first, to counteract the daylight fallacies concocted, particularly, by the European sources about African history, and, secondly, to begin a process that will not only project African history in its proper perspectives, but also to give it a pride of place in world history. Since this intellectual awakening, numerous intellectual platforms have emerged to sustain the movement initiated by Africanist historians. Among such platforms include deliberate efforts by Departments of History, particularly, in institutions of higher learning across Africa to promote the study and researches in African history.

In addition to the above platforms, many intellectual journals have been established to promote in-depth study of all aspects of African history. For instance, in Nigeria, we have the Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria (JHSN). It is not arguable, one supposes, that it is the practice not only with Nigerian historians, but also among historians in other independent African countries, who have also established similar platforms for documenting research findings on African history.

Our platform, Journal of African Studies (JJOAS), a Production by the Department of History and Diplomatic Studies, Taraba State University, Jalingo, is one of the aforementioned intellectual platforms that have been established by African intellectuals to redeem African history from the state of oblivion, as well as to project African history in the most appropriate perspective. I have the honour, on behalf of the Editorial Board of the Journal, to appreciate academics who have continued to partner with us on this platform to keep our dream very “loudly” alive.

Prof. Akombo Ityavkase Elijah
Editor-in-Chief

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Influence Of Broadcast Media Enlightenment Campaigns On Trachoma Diseases Among Young Women In Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract
The study examined the influence of broadcast media and enlightenment campaigns on trachoma disease among young women in Ekiti. Paired-depth interview and survey method were used for the study. Using Yamane's (1967) sample size determination procedure, 400 respondents were selected from the three Local Government Areas, while two ophthalmologists were purposively selected for the paired depth interview sessions in each of the three State General Hospitals selected from Moba-Ekiti, Ikere-Ekiti, and Iyin-Ekiti, respectively, and were thoroughly interviewed on the subject matter of investigation. Findings showed that social media platform is their source of enlightenment campaign about trachoma disease. Findings showed that good ocular health is the perceived benefit of preventive practices against trachoma disease. Findings showed that poor ocular health education was significantly associated with vulnerability of young women to trachoma disease. The study recommended that social media should be integrated as a medium of development communication with indigenous communication media and traditional media of communication to produce holistic, impactful, and robust health information for both rural and urban sectors of society. Regular eye screenings and tests should be initiated and sustained in every Local Government Area in Ekiti State. Initiation and sustenance of eye screening programmes and the extension of eye care capacity through regular training and re-training of professionals in the ophthalmological sectors are very crucial for the overall wellbeing of the people in Ekiti State. An office or unit must be created within the Ekiti State Ministry of Health to oversee all issues that relate to trachoma and formulate policy, to put the menace under check.
Keywords: Broadcast Media, Enlightenment Campaigns, Trachoma, Disease, Young Women

Introduction

Of all vehicles of mass media available to man for mass communication, radio and television are the most prevalently used for health messages in developing countries (Toubali et al., 2012). Mass media are used to effect behavioural changes, create awareness about certain health issues, and used for the dissemination of preventive health information among people in Africa (Shannon and Aase, 2016). There is a positive association between mass media enlightenment campaigns and public awareness and attitudinal change, especially with regard to health (Idamah, 2015). Many countries in Africa have a strategy to check the rising cases of blinding trachoma among people. The National Blindness Prevention Programmes broadcast enlightenment messages on radio and television about trachoma disease as a means to eliminate the surging cases of the disease in some African countries (Toubali et al., 2012). Due to a high level of illiteracy, poverty, and other socio-economic limitations, people in developing nations like Nigeria source their messages from the electronic media. Electronic media such as the radio and internet require no financial investment by the people, to access its information, unlike the print media that requires a financial commitment from readers. As Idamah (2015) notes,

the broadcast media, especially the radio, has the capacity to disseminate health messages widely and pervasively to people in urban centres and far-flung rural areas. While the radio serves the health information needs of the people in rural areas, television and social media cater to the health information needs of the people in urban centres.

Trachoma is the eighth leading cause of blindness globally (Burton and Mabey, 2009). Available literature shows that trachoma-induced blindness is four times higher in young women than in men (Courtright and West, 2004). Recent findings have shown that women account for 64% of global blindness (Courtright and West, 2004). Most of the primary caregivers are young women and girls, and this exposes them to all manner of infections from children and other categories of patients more than men (Courtright and West, 2004). Prevention of blindness and quality eye healthcare among people is an important public health concern. Eye health and vision have a tremendous impact on every aspect of a person's life. Eye health is defined as the quality of vision, ocular health, overall health, and quality of life. Eye health is very important to achieving a nation's development plans (Burton and Mabey, 2009). Trachoma is one of the most dangerous eye-related diseases. The trachoma disease is becoming a public health issue in most developing nations, especially among the uneducated population. The elderly seldom experience eye-related health issues compared to the youthful population (Kassir, 2000). Trachoma is a leading contagious cause of avoidable and treatable blindness in Africa, where the World Health Organisation (WHO)-recommended SAFE: surgery for trichiasis, antibiotic treatment, facial cleanliness, and environmental hygiene has been under-propagated (Yorston and Mabey, 2003). Trachoma is responsible for about six million blind people in developing countries, most especially in the poor communities of those countries (Rabiu et al., 2007). Enlightenment campaigns and mass awareness creation against trachoma disorders and abnormalities are unique in health and medical practices and have the potential to halt the continued growth of visual impairment significantly in developing nations (Klauss and Schaller, 2007). Stark lack or absence of information is one of the major reasons most people experience trachoma issues which eventually culminate in blindness (Nkumbe et al., 2019). Redness and pains are the two major causes of trachoma disorders in patients (Kassir, 2000). Mass national and local campaigns in the field of ophthalmology are conspicuously lacking when compared to campaigns about other areas of health interventions embarked upon by Local, State and Federal Governments in Nigeria. Trachoma abnormalities have continued to heighten the level of blindness among people in the Southern part of Nigeria. While radio is more effective in reaching men to disseminate information about health policies and programmes, religious centres have been found to be more effective in reaching women for the dissemination of health-related messages (Nkumbe, 2019).

Kassir (2000) conducted a study on trachoma issues and found that mass media have an influence on individual health decisions and behaviour. Trachoma issues in many underdeveloped countries and regions are a reflection of the socio-economic status of most people in those regions and countries (McGavin, 1999). Trachoma remains a cause of blindness among disadvantaged populations in Africa. 146 people are estimated to suffer active trachoma, and about 6 million people are blind as a result of untreated trachoma (Ejere et al., 2015). The presence of flies is a risk factor of trachoma because flies act as vectors for the transmission of chlamydiae (Schemann et al., 2003). Eye infections are the leading causes of trachoma more than any other condition, including cataract (Mabey and Solomon, 2003). Trachoma is a contagious eye disease and an important public health problem endemic in developing nations of Africa and Asia, where poverty, socio-economic, and deep-seated political failures persist (Dinc, 2023).

Trachoma afflicts the poor and economically disadvantaged people and causes visual impairment among people (Traore et al., 2018). One of the ways trachoma occurs is through contact between dirty hands and the eyes. The health of the eye is relatively neglected among people in most developing nations like Nigeria. In most of the private and government-owned hospitals, eye tests and the services of ophthalmologists are rare. In most of the health-related studies that have been conducted, trachoma disorders and abnormalities have been under-researched by health and communication scholars.

One of the major strategies found to have been effective in curtailing the issue of trachoma is various environmental sanitary measures in the affected communities (Rabiu et al., 2007). Besides, one of the trachoma prevention strategies is the promotion of face washing and cleanliness to halt transmission of the disease (Zack et al., 2008). Eliminating trachoma is the objective of the Alliance for the Global Elimination of Trachoma by 2020 (Courtright and West, 2004). The AGET adopted SAFE, which includes surgery to correct trichiasis, anti-microbial agents to treat trachoma, face washing, and environmental cleanliness to interrupt transmission (Courtright and West, 2004). The battle against blinding trachoma is addressed with an integrated approach of environmental cleanliness, antibiotics, hygienic promotion and surgery (Baltussen et al., 2005). However, studies have indicated that in spite of the integrated strategy, trachoma still remains a prevalent disease among young women in the developing nations of the world. Of all the health studies and research, trachoma, as an

active eye health issue, has been under-researched among African scholars when compared to other communicable and non-communicable diseases in Africa. The objectives of the study are to: understand the sources of media campaigns about trachoma abnormalities among young women in Ekiti State; ascertain the level of susceptibility to trachoma abnormalities among young women in Ekiti State; to know environmental factors associated with the trachoma abnormalities in Ekiti State, to determine the perceived benefits inherent in the preventive practices against trachoma abnormalities among young women in Ekiti State and to know the barriers that are inherent in the fight against the trachoma abnormalities among young women in Ekiti State.

The study is anchored on the health belief model. The health belief model is designed to motivate people to take certain positive health actions (Ongki and Muhammad, 2024). An individual would take certain actions to prevent or reduce health problems on the basis of their health beliefs (Ongki and Muhammad, 2024). The health belief model is one of the most widely used theoretical frameworks to explain health behaviour in a group of people. Health belief model assumes that an individual's is influenced by the perceptions of vulnerability, severity, benefits, and barriers to adopting health behavioural changes. The perceived susceptibility to contracting trachoma compels young women to adhere to taking medication to prevent being infected by the disease. The fear of getting infected by trachoma, which causes blindness, forces young women to seek means to prevent the contagious disease. Perceived benefits can be measured in the context of trachoma treatment behaviour among young women (Ratnasari and Sahrudi, 2024). The perceived benefit is the ease with which the vaccines against trachoma are efficacious and improvements in symptoms and perceived changes in physical condition during the treatment process (Ratnasari and Sahrudi, 2024). The perception of severity occurs when trachoma shows symptoms, and family members and other members of a community get infected (Ratnasari and Sahrudi, 2024). Self-efficacy means engaging in preventive behaviours against trachoma. When people learn that they can easily use a method to reduce trachoma, they have no fear of adopting it. Lastly, the perceived barriers to engaging in preventive behaviours against trachoma are manifold. It may presuppose educational or socio-economic barriers.

Materials and Methods

The study investigated broadcast media enlightenment campaigns on trachoma disease. Paired-depth interview and survey method were used for the study. Using a multi-stage sampling technique, Ekiti State was divided into three senatorial districts: Ekiti Central, Ekiti North, and Ekiti South Senatorial Districts. The three senatorial districts were further divided into Local Government Areas. The three Local Government Areas that host State General Hospitals were further selected from each of the three Senatorial Districts of Ekiti State. A multi-stage sampling technique is a form of cluster samples in which larger samples are further subdivided into smaller and more target groupings for the purpose of surveying (Hankin et al., 2019).

A purposive sample was used to select Local Government Areas in each of the three Senatorial Districts in Ekiti State. Three Local Government Areas that host State General Hospitals were selected from each of the Senatorial Districts. Purposive sampling enables a researcher to concentrate on subjects or respondents with certain characteristics who are relevant to a study and can provide relevant data to a researcher (Etikan, 2016). Ekiti State was divided into three senatorial districts: Ekiti Central Senatorial District, Ekiti North Senatorial District and Ekiti South Senatorial District. The three senatorial districts were subdivided into local government areas. Three local government areas that host state general hospitals were further selected from each of the three senatorial districts. The researchers ensured that State General Hospitals staffed with at least two ophthalmologists were selected for the purpose of a paired-depth interview. Thus, State General Hospital was selected in Irepodun Local Government Area, Iyin-Ekiti, from the Central Senatorial District; State General Hospital was selected in Otun-Ekiti, Moba Local Government Area, from the North Senatorial District, Ikere-Ekiti State General Hospital was selected in Ikere-Ekiti Local Government Area from the Ekiti South Senatorial District of Ekiti State.

Using Yamane's (1967) sample size determination procedure, 400 respondents were selected from the three Local Government Areas. Copies of the questionnaire were given to the respondents on the basis of their geographical proximity to researchers, willingness to participate in the study, and their knowledge of trachoma disease. With the use of the convenience sampling technique, researchers selected 400 respondents across the three Local Government Areas of Ekiti State. The three Local Government Areas are: Moba, Ikere-Ekiti, and Iyin-Ekiti. Young women met by researchers on the streets, malls, motor parks, and schools were given a questionnaire to fill out. However, of the 400 copies of questionnaire administered to the respondents, 394 copies of the questionnaire were properly filled, returned, and found useful by the researchers. Convenience sampling is a non-probabilistic sample most frequently used in quantitative studies (Wu Suen et al., 2014). In convenience sampling, respondents who are readily accessible and fall within the geographical catchments of

the researchers are included in or selected for the study (Wu Suen et al., 2014). Convenience sampling is easy, affordable and respondents are already available (Etikan, 2016).

For the paired-depth interview, two ophthalmologists were purposively selected for the paired-depth interview sessions in each of the three State General Hospitals selected in Moba-Ekiti, Ikere-Ekiti and Iyin-Ekiti, respectively, and were thoroughly interviewed on the subject matter of investigation. The paired-depth interview had six participants in all. Two ophthalmologists from Moba-Ekiti General Hospital, two ophthalmologists from Ikere-Ekiti General Hospital, and while two ophthalmologists were also interviewed at Iyin-Ekiti General Hospital, making six ophthalmologists interviewed in all. The paired-depth interview ensured a high level of confidentiality because the names and personalities of the interview participants were never made known publicly due to research ethical considerations.

Data obtained from paired-depth interview were analysed, interpreted thematically and presented in line with research objectives. Inferences were done about the ophthalmologists' knowledge of the level of susceptibility among young women to trachoma and the environmental factors associated with trachoma disease among young women in Ekiti State. For the survey design, three research assistants were recruited to help administer copies of the questionnaire in line with the research objectives in the three selected Local Government Areas of Ekiti State. Data gathered from the survey design were analysed using frequency and percentage.

Results

Quantitative Data Analysis, Interpretations, and Presentation for Survey Method

Table 1: Source of Enlightenment Campaigns about Trachoma Disease among Young Women

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Interpersonal Contacts	140	35.5
Radio	50	12.7
Television	24	6.1
Social Media Platforms	180	45.7
Total	394	100

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2025

Table 1 shows that 140 respondents representing 35.5% stated that interpersonal contact is their source of enlightenment campaigns about trachoma disease, 50 respondents representing 12.7% maintained that radio is their source of enlightenment campaigns about trachoma disease, 24 respondents representing 6.1% affirmed that television is their source of enlightenment campaigns about trachoma disease, while 180 respondents representing 45.7% averred that social media platform is their source of enlightenment campaign about trachoma disease.

Table 2: Perceived Benefits of Preventive Practices against Trachoma Disease

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Good Ocular Health	171	43.4
Trachoma-Free Life	98	24.8
Early Treatment of Trachoma	85	21.6
Early Detection of Trachoma Symptoms	40	10.2
Total	394	100

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2025

Table 2 shows that 171 respondents representing 43.4% stated that good ocular health is the perceived benefit of preventive practices against trachoma disease, 98 respondents representing 24.8% averred that trachoma-free life is the perceived benefit of preventive practice against trachoma-disease, 85 respondents representing 21.6% affirmed that early treatment of trachoma is the perceived benefit of preventive practice against trachoma disease, while 40 respondents representing 10.2% maintained that early detection of trachoma symptoms is the perceived benefit of preventive practice against trachoma.

Qualitative Data Analysis, Interpretations, and Presentation for Paired Depth Interview

Theme 1: Level of Susceptibility to Trachoma disease among Young Women

Data gathered from the paired-depth interview showed the level of susceptibility to trachoma disease among young women in Irepodun Local Government Area. The interview session showed that poor ocular health education was significantly associated with vulnerability of young women to trachoma disease. The interview participants are the Senior and Junior Ophthalmologists in Iyin-Ekiti General Hospital. Shedding more light on this, an interviewee, who is a senior ophthalmologist in the General Hospital, Iyin-Ekiti, said that:

> Ocular health education is the worst enlightenment campaigns in Nigeria. Every day, listeners and viewers listen to different health programmes on the radio and watch all manner of health enlightenment campaigns on television. However, when you study those health messages, you can hardly discover any about ocular health campaigns or messages. Unknown to many people, apart from the heart, the eyes are the most important part of the human body. Little or no effort, however, has been given to this important part of the body with regard to enlightening and educating the people about preventing all manner of ocular-related diseases. The level of susceptibility to trachoma, glaucoma, and other eye-related diseases is very high in Irepodun Local Government Area because no education is extended to young women about trachoma disease. Those infected by trachoma disease are only educated on the methods to cure or to prevent future recurrence when the victims consult us in our hospital here.

Another interviewee, who happens to be a junior ophthalmologist in the General Hospital, Iyin-Ekiti, said that:

> Good ocular health is the health of all other parts of the body. Government, policy-makers, and Non-Governmental Organisations are fond of disseminating messages about communicable and non-communicable diseases to the citizenry, using interpersonal and impersonal means to reach people in the rural and urban sectors of society. However, scanty messages from the government and relevant stakeholders in the health sector are available about trachoma disease. I am of the belief that if you, as researchers, go out to the towns under this local government area to interview people about trachoma disease, not many of them would have an idea and knowledge of the disease. And that is to show how poor the ocular education is among young women and other people. When information is not available in the public domain about a certain disease, how do you want people to know about it and take actions to cure or prevent it?

Theme 2: Environmental Factors associated with Trachoma Disease among Young Women

Data gathered from the paired-depth interview showed the environmental factors associated with trachoma disease among young women. The interview session showed that the most prominent environmental factor associated with trachoma disease is the massive presence of flies around human abodes. The interview participants are senior and junior ophthalmologists at Moba-Ekiti General Hospital. Shedding more light on this, an interviewee, who is a senior ophthalmologist in the hospital, said that:

> There are different environmental factors that are responsible for trachoma disease among young women. The most prominent one of all the environmental factors is the massive presence of flies around human abodes. Flies are greatly associated with trachoma. This is the reason face washing is very important every day. As we brush our teeth every morning and evening, face washing should also be done twice every day to prevent trachoma. Not many people regard face washing as an important health behaviour. However, face washing can prevent a lot of health issues unknown to many people. When you check the rate of trachoma infection, you will notice that young women in rural areas experience the disease more than young women in urban centres. First, young women in rural areas hardly use a latrine or toilet for defecation; they engage in open defecation to ease themselves. Flies hover around them while they defecate, and that is one major invitation to trachoma disease.

Another interviewee, who happens to be a junior ophthalmologist at Moba-Ekiti General Hospital, said that:

> The environment in the rural areas is not as neat and clean as the environment in the urban centres. As a result, flies and other flying insects of all types and sizes hover around people, causing trachoma disease and other diseases. Besides, self-ocular medication is another issue that worsens the case of trachoma among young people. Many young women administer drugs to cure trachoma disease themselves instead of consulting professional ophthalmologists in the government General hospital. In fact, some young women infected by trachoma disease consult quack eye physicians for medical attention.

Theme 3: Barriers Inherent in the Fight against Trachoma Disease among Young Women

Data gathered from the paired-depth interview showed the barriers inherent in the fight against trachoma disease. The interview session showed that an unclean environment is one of the major factors that impede the eradication of trachoma among young women. The interview participants are the senior and junior ophthalmologists in Ikere-Ekiti General Hospital. Explaining further on this, an interviewee, who is a senior ophthalmologist in Ikere-Ekiti General Hospital, said that:

> There are many barriers that are inherent in the fight against trachoma disease. An unclean environment is one of the major factors that impede the eradication of trachoma among people. Absence of a standard toilet or latrine where people can defecate is another major issue that worsens the issue of trachoma disease, especially in rural areas. Open defecation and the absence of water for cleaning also worsen the issue of trachoma disease among people, especially young women. Low awareness about trachoma disease remains an undaunting challenge in the fight

> against the issue of trachoma disease in rural areas of Ekiti State. What multiplies flies more is the open defecation in the streams, bushes, and in the open fields. Young women have a poverty of enlightenment and education when it comes to trachoma disease, and this accounts for the worsening case of the disease in the rural areas of Ekiti State.

Another interviewee, who happens to be a junior ophthalmologist in Ikere-Ekiti General Hospital, said that:

> When it comes to enlightenment and education of young women about trachoma, so many means of communication have failed, including the mass media. However, using radio and television to provide enlightenment campaigns and education about trachoma disease to young women in rural areas is a waste of time. The use of interpersonal contacts to create awareness and education about trachoma disease among young women in rural areas is highly crucial to eliminating the disease. The use of social media is highly effective in the creation of awareness and education among young women in urban areas.

Discussions

Findings showed that social media platform is their source of enlightenment campaign about trachoma disease. The findings are in tandem with the position of Idamah (2015), who found that social media platforms have wrested the powers of immediacy and heterogenous coverage of events from the traditional media such as newspapers, television, and radio. According to him, youths now prefer to source their health-related information on social media platforms to getting the health messages from the traditional media.

Findings showed that good ocular health is the perceived benefit of preventive practices against trachoma disease. The findings are in sync with the assumptions of the Health Belief Model and the position of Ratnasari and Sahrudi (2024), who found that perceived benefits can be measured in the context of trachoma treatment behaviour among young women. The perceived benefit is the ease with which the vaccines against trachoma are efficacious and improvements in symptoms and perceived changes in physical condition during the treatment process (Ratnasari and Sahrudi, 2024).

Findings showed that poor ocular health education was significantly associated with vulnerability of young women to trachoma disease. The findings align with the position of Etim *et al.* (2019), who found that improvement in eye education and awareness creation for patients of trachoma to consult eye care professionals at the outset of the symptoms of trachoma disease, and even the cases of blindness.

Findings showed that the most prominent environmental factor associated with trachoma disease is the massive presence of flies around human abodes. The findings are in line with the position of Shresthat *et al.* (2014), who found that poor health literacy is a major factor for the unhygienic practices and weak environmental sanitation practices among people. They found that dirty surroundings and unclean toilets or latrines and open defecation practices among the economically disadvantaged people breed flies and diseases of different sorts.

Findings showed that an unclean environment is one of the major factors that impede the elimination of trachoma among young women. The findings are in sync with the position of Chetty and Bangalee (2021), who found that poor hygienic practices, unclean environment, and poor human health are greatly associated with trachoma. The high incidence of infectious diseases results from the poor disposal of litter and poor waste management in both rural and urban centres.

Conclusion

Trachoma is a severe eye-related disease unknown to many people. The causes of trachoma disease are very many around us, but people are not conscious of those causes. Besides, means of mass communication such as radio and television about trachoma disease are ineffective in the awareness creation and enlightenment campaigns of the disease. Ophthalmologists, together with policy-makers in the health sector and the Non-Governmental Organisations, should form partnerships to eliminate the menace of trachoma disease among young women. Social media platforms have been much effective in the propagation of trachoma disease. Continued use of the medium to reach young women in a bid to educate and create awareness about the menace of trachoma disease is extremely crucial and a step in the right directions aimed at total elimination of the disease.

Recommendations

Social media platforms are now eclipsing the traditional media of communication. When health plans or messages are meant for the youths the best medium of contact is social media. Thus, the study recommended that social media should be integrated as a medium of development communication with indigenous communication media and traditional media of communication, such as radio, television, newspapers, and

billboard, to produce holistic, impactful and robust health information for both rural and urban sectors of society.

Good eye is the light of the body. Ophthalmologists in various hospitals across Ekiti State should enable people to know that good ocular health represents the general wellbeing and health of the whole human body. Thus, regular eye screenings and tests must be initiated and sustained in every Local Government Area across Ekiti State. Initiation and sustenance of eye screening programmes and the extension of eye care capacity through regular training and re-training of professionals in the ophthalmological sectors are very crucial for the overall wellbeing of the people in Ekiti State.

Due to the high level of susceptibility to trachoma among young women, an office or unit must be created in the Ekiti State Ministry of Health to oversee all issues that border on trachoma and formulate policy towards putting the menace under check. Massive healthy eye campaigns must be initiated and sustained to eliminate the worsening cases of trachoma disease among young women in Ekiti State.

Fly control initiatives should be enforced in all Local Government Areas in Ekiti State. Left-overs of food and unexhausted fruits must be properly packaged and burned to prevent flies. Flies are the major cause of trachoma. To guard against their invasion, open defecation and a dirty environment should be prevented.

Clean environment and clean potable water should be made available to people to reduce the cases of outbreak of communicable and non-communicable diseases, including trachoma disease. The government alone cannot meet the needs of the populace in its entirety. Non-Governmental Organisations and kind-hearted individuals must partner government to make potable water available to people. Health workers must also ensure that they conduct house-to-house checks to be sure the environment is clean and safe for human habitation.

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Security Implications Of The Involvement Of Military Personnel In Conflict Resolution In Nigeria

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Abstract
The Nigerian military is traditionally mandated to uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country; they are also required to play a significant role in ISOPs when the need arises. But despite these fundamental roles, so many unprofessional and unethical conducts are being perpetrated by the military in the discharge of their internal security operations. This study examined the security implications of the involvement of Military Personnel in Conflict Resolution in Nigeria. Additionally, the study examined the challenges of Military Personnel presence in Conflict Resolution and the prospects of Military Personnel presence in Conflict Resolution in Nigeria. This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gather comprehensive data. The classical theory of crime was used for this paper. The findings showed that there are numerous challenges ranging from human rights violations, inhuman treatment, use of force, indiscriminate arrest, rape, looting, and extrajudicial killings etc. The study recommended that the Government should provide a viable legal framework to regulate the Military Personnel in internal security operations. Military Personnel should be well-trained with modern security equipment to tackle and manage internal security crises. The use of force, human rights violations inherent in the military, in civil conflict, should be addressed. The Nigerian Police should be well-equipped to tackle most of the internal security challenges to avoid the military taking over the Police job. Civil–Military Personnel relations should be promoted by the government for a cordial relationship, and adequate legal punishment should be meted out to any soldier found wanting in unprofessional conduct of human rights violation.
Keywords: Military Personnel, Conflict, Conflict Resolution

Introduction

The Military, as part of Operation Safe Haven, is constitutionally mandated to assist the Police and other relevant security agencies in the maintenance of law and order, especially in the face of terroristic violence. The term commonly known as Military Assistance in Internal Security Operations (ISPOs) is a mixture of both prospects and problems (Challenges). The prospects of the military operation deal with quelling of catastrophic national threats, while the problem (challenges) deals with human right abuses, brute force, and poor handling of civil crises, to mention a few. Security is often viewed in terms of the basic survival, welfare, and protection of the state existing in an international system characterized by self-help (Viotti, P. &Kauppi, M. 2009:15).

Ozoemena (2009) argues that, security is all about national interest and involves "the sum total of actions and measures, including legislative and operational procedures, adopted to ensure peace, stability and the general well-being of a nation and its citizens. Internal security Operations are those acts carried out by the domestic security agents, such as the Police, Customs Services, Immigration Services, and others to contain domestic security threats. These threats often relate to dire cases of riots, demonstrations, strikes, communal clashes, terrorism, and the like, which normally fall outside the constitutional duty of the military (Azinge, 2013:4).

Affirming this, section 4 of the Police Act of Nigeria provides the general duties of the Police as the preservation of law and order, the protection of life and property, and the due enforcement of all laws and regulations with which they are directly charged within the society.

Conceptual Clarifications

Conflict

Conflict is commonly defined as an open clash between two opposing groups or individuals. Usually, the disagreement may be a result of incompatibility of views, opinion or access to shared resources. In Nigeria, many of the conflicts bedeviling the polity have been communal and ethnic based. Different scholars have defined conflict in many ways. It has been defined as the existence of non-compatibility or disagreements between two actors (individuals, groups, organizations or nations) in their interaction over the issues of interests, values, beliefs, emotions, goals, space, positions, scarce resources, etc. In his work, Fink (1968:456) defines conflict as any "situation or process in which two or more social entities are linked by at least one form of antagonistic psychological relation or at least one form of antagonistic interaction."

The psychological antagonisms are such things as incompatible goals, mutually exclusive interests, emotional hostility, factual or value dissensions and traditional enmities; while antagonistic interactions "range from the most direct, violent and unregulated struggle to the most subtle, indirect and highly regulated forms of mutual interference" (Fink, 1968:456). Lewis Coser (1956:8) also defines conflict as "A struggle over values and claims to secure status, power and resources, a struggle in which the aims of opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals."

Some scholars also advocate for a generalist approach to the study of conflict. They contend that, granted that there should be a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of conflict, a direct study of a particular conflict, for instance, international conflict, cannot provide every detail to construct a universal theory that could be relevant to every phenomenon. For a conflict situation to be possible, two or more parties will have to be interested in one thing, which is the cause of conflict (NOUN PCR 714).

Causes of Conflict

For purposes of analysis of the causes of conflict, it may be useful to identify three general categories: Communication, Organizational, and personal.

i. Communication

Semantic difficulties: Words do not mean the same thing to everyone who hears or uses them. If the communication is related to an activity that is critical to the organization, a semantic misunderstanding can easily lead to conflict. For instance, Misunderstandings - "noise" "Noise" in the communications process can take a number of forms. Most obviously, noise is physical - the parties in the organization cannot "hear' one another because too many people are talking at once, there is a radio blaring in the background, or the construction workers on the street are using a jackhammer. Noise also comes in the form of distorted signals – the fax message is misunderstood because poor-quality fax paper makes it difficult to read the letters on the page.

ii. Organizational Structure

Group interdependence: The greater the degree of interdependence, the greater is the likelihood of communication difficulties. Greater interdependence also increases the possibility that the parties need to share resources. If these resources are scarce, the probability of conflict is increased.

iii. Personal Variables

Personality types contribute to conflict in the sense that we are different human beings. Our personalities are different and the way we want to be identified also differ, and if we do not take time to understudy or recognize it, we are bound to misunderstand each other and this may lead to conflict. In essence, we have to understand that we have personality types and the roles we play are important in the identification of our personality.

Value systems also differ in our daily interactions with each other, and the way and manner we prioritize our values are also different. This also requires that since values are often incompatible, we have to meet each other halfway or else conflict is bound to occur. Mr. A's priority may be to buy a car, and Mr. B's priority may be to build a house. Mr. A and B therefore have different values. If however, Mr. A is indebted to Mr. B, he faces a personality value conflict of either paying his debt or have the payment put off till a later date. If Mr. B, who has a value of building a house first, gets to know that Mr. A, who is owing him, is about to buy a car without settling the debt owed him, this may lead to conflict and dispute between them (NOUN PCR 714).

Types of Conflict

By evaluating a conflict according to the five categories below – relationship conflict data, interest, structural, and value – we can begin to determine the cause of conflict and design resolution strategies that will have a higher probability of success.

i. Relationship Conflicts

Relationship conflicts occur because of the presence of strong negative misperceptions or stereotypes, poor communication or miscommunication, repetitive negative behaviors. Relationship problems often fuel disputes and lead to an unnecessary, escalating spiral of destructive conflict. Supporting the balanced expression of perspectives and emotions for acknowledgement (no one agreement) is one effective approach to managing relational conflict.

ii. Data Conflicts

Data conflicts occur when people lack the information necessary to make wise decisions, are misinformed, disagree on which data is relevant, interpret information differently, or have competing assessment procedures. Some of the conflicts may be unnecessary since they are caused by poor communication between the people in conflict. Other data conflicts may be genuine incompatibilities associated with data collection, interpretation or communication. Most data conflicts will have "data solutions."

iii. Interest Conflicts

Interest conflicts are caused by competition over perceived incompatible norms. Conflicts of interest result when one or more of the parties believe that, in order to satisfy his or her needs, the needs and interests of an opponent must be sacrificed. A variety of interests and intentions underlie and motivate positions in negative and must be addressed for maximized resolution. Interest-based conflicts occur over substantive issues (such as money, physical resources, time, etc. procedural issues (the way the dispute is to be resolved); and psychological issues (perceptions of trust, fairness, desire for participation, respect, etc.). For an interest based dispute to be resolved, parties must be assisted to define and express their individual interests so that all of these interests may be jointly addressed. Interest-based conflict is best resolved through the maximization of integration of the parties' respective interests, positive intentions, and designating experiential outcomes.

iv. Structural Conflicts

Structural conflicts are caused by forces external to the people in dispute. Physical resources or authority, geographic constraints (distance or proximity, time too little or too much), organizational changes, and so forth can make structural conflict seem like a crisis. It can be helpful to assist parties in conflict to appreciate the external forces and constraints bearing upon them.

v. Value Conflicts

Value conflicts are caused by perceived or actual incompatible belief systems. Values are beliefs that people use to give meaning to their lives. Values express what is "good" or "bad", "right" or "wrong", "just" or "unjust". Differing values need not cause conflict. People can live together in harmony with different systems. Value disputes arise only when people attempt to force one set of values on others or lay claim to exclusive value systems that do not allow for divergent beliefs. It is of no use to try to change value and belief systems during relating short and strategic mediation interventions. It can, however, be helpful to each participant's expression of their values and beliefs for acknowledgement by the other party. Other types of conflict include:

vi. Pseudo Conflict

Which refers to those misunderstandings in which we perceive that there is a conflict when there is none? For instance, Peter and John may agree upon a topic but not realize this. They are interpreting one another's messages as being counter to their own messages. This failure to understand and to realize their misunderstanding creates relational conflict. The solution lies in listening mindfully and checking your perceptions with your partner. Try to avoid assumptions and mind-reading.

vii. Ego Conflict

Ego conflict occurs when we are emotionally interested in a decision. We believe that if others disagree with us, they are rejecting us. Thus, we become stubborn, willful, and proud. The solution lies in recognizing that conflicts occur between the best of friends. No one will agree with another all the time. Disagreements are not an indication that the relationship is in trouble. Learn to apologize and to take responsibility for creating an ego conflict.

viii. Simple Conflict

This is a difference of opinion that both parties recognize, acknowledge, and accept. The conflict may be over how to share limited resources, whom to support in an election, or where to dine. The solution lies in agreeing in an agreeable manner. If the issue is minor, it is easier to compromise or accommodate. If the issue is major, it's better to collaborate to resolve the conflict (NOUN PCR 714: 16-18)

Conflict Resolution

When human beings come together, there is bound to be conflict. This is because human beings have different backgrounds, interests and worldviews. These lead to differences in opinion. These differences in opinion could

sometimes degenerate into aggression and violence. This conflict may first be noticed at the individual level, but may eventually spread to the larger society. But it is important to note that just as peace and cooperation is desirable, conflict too could be progressive when not allowed to become destructive. However, when it does get out of hand, it is necessary to break a long-term resolution based on understanding its underlying causes. This will ensure that resurgence does not arise. There are many definitions of conflict, which you should endeavour to seek out. However, conflict is commonly defined as an open clash between two opposing groups or individuals. Usually, the disagreement may be a result of incompatibility of views, opinion or access to shared resources. In Nigeria, many of the conflicts bedeviling the polity has been communal and ethnic based (NOUN PCR 715: 12).

Processes of Conflict Resolution

There are two major orientations in the processes of conflict resolution. These are the Cooperative and Competitive approaches to the settlement of conflicts. Oftentimes, the depth of grief may make it difficult for a party to the conflict to be cooperative during negotiations. Nonetheless, the conflict has to be resolved one way or the other. You are enjoined to explore other possible processes of conflict resolution, especially African traditional processes of conflict resolution.

Strategies of Conflict Resolution

The different strategies that could be used for conflict resolution. These include Conciliation, Mediation, Arbitration, and Litigation. Though arbitration and litigation have legal moorings, all are used interchangeably during the resolution of conflicts at individual, state, and international levels. A number of strategies exist for the purposes of conflict resolution. These include:

1. **Conciliation**

Conciliation is a process whereby the parties to a dispute agree to utilize the services of a conciliator, who then meets with the parties separately in an attempt to resolve their differences. Conciliation differs from arbitration in that the conciliation process, in and of itself, has no legal standing, and the conciliator usually has no authority to seek evidence or call witnesses, usually writes no decision, and makes no award. Conciliation differs from mediation in that the main goal is to conciliate, most of the time by seeking concessions. In mediation, the mediator tries to guide the discussion in a way that optimizes the parties' needs, takes feelings into account and reframes representations. If the conciliator is successful in negotiating an understanding between the parties, the understanding is almost always committed to writing (usually with the assistance of legal counsel) and signed by the parties, at which time it becomes a legally binding contract and falls under contract law. Most successful conciliators are highly skilled negotiators (NOUN PCR 715:10).

2. **Mediation**

Mediation is a process in which a neutral third party, the mediator, assists two or more parties in order to help them negotiate an agreement on a matter of common interest. Mediation applies to different fields, with some common peculiar elements and some differences for each of its specialties. The main fields of application of mediation are business commerce, legal disputes, and diplomacy, but minor forms can be found in other fields too. The mediation in marriages is technically admitted in the category, even if it follows its own history since the times of ancient Greeks (NOUN PCR 715:10).

3. **Arbitration**

Arbitration, in the law, is a form of legal alternative to litigation whereby the parties to a dispute agree to submit their respective positions (through agreement or hearing) to a neutral third party (the arbitrator(s) or arbiter(s)) for resolution. Since arbitration is based upon either contract law or the law of treaties, the agreement between the parties to submit their dispute to arbitration is a legally binding contract. All arbitral decisions are considered to be "final and binding." This does not, however, void the requirements of law. Any dispute not excluded from arbitration by virtue of law (e.g. criminal proceedings) may be submitted to arbitration. Arbitration exists under national and international law, and arbitration can be carried out between private individuals, between states, or between states and private individuals (NOUN PCR 715:10).

4. **Litigation**

Litigation is a lawsuit or a civil action brought before a court in which the party commencing the action, the plaintiff, seeks a legal remedy, usually for an offence. If the plaintiff is successful, judgement will be given in the plaintiff's favour, and a range of court orders may be issued to enforce a right, impose a penalty, award damages, impose an injunction to prevent an act or compel an act, or to obtain a declaratory judgement to prevent future legal disputes (NOUN PCR 715:11).

Military Personnel in Conflict Resolution

The military involvement in internal operations is inevitable and sacrosanct, going by the rising wave and rate of crime and violent conflicts in the country. The major national threats tackled by the military are Terrorism, Ethno-religious crises, communal conflict, militancy, armed robbery, kidnapping etc. However, the military is constitutionally mandated to assist the Police and other relevant security agencies in the maintenance of law and order, especially in the face of terroristic violence. The term commonly known as Military Assistance in Internal Security Operations (ISPOs) is a mixture of both prospects and problems (Challenges). The prospects of the military operation deal with quelling catastrophic national threats, while the problem (challenges) deal with human rights abuse, brute force, and poor handling of civil crises, to mention a few. The study predominantly utilized secondary data, and in the final analysis, the findings indicated that today's Nigeria is witnessing a higher level of aggression. The research recommends street adherence to professional rules of engagement and international best practices of military conduct and operations.

The military in any country is the custodian of national security as well as the symbol of national unity. In recognition of its pivotal role, the successive Constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1960, 1963, 1979, and 1999) provide for the establishment of the Nigerian Armed Forces, whose functions include:

a. Defending Nigeria from external aggression;
b. Maintaining its territorial integrity and securing its borders from violation on land, sea, or air;
c. Suppressing insurrection and acting in aid of civil authorities to restore order when called upon to do so by the President, but subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by an act of the National Assembly.
d. Performing such functions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly (Section 217).

The article 3 above talks about Military Assistance to Civil Authorities (MACA). This forms the legal cum constitutional basis for the involvement of the military in Internal Security Operations (ISOPs) in Nigeria. In effect, much as the Nigerian military is traditionally mandated to uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, they are also required to play a significant role in ISOPs when the need arises. This has become all the more crucial in view of the contemporary security challenges in Nigeria. In the views of Athekam (2012:n.p) "due to some exigencies of contemporary security challenges, soldiers are increasingly involved in Internal Security Operations". This observation has been corroborated by Ahmad (2012) when he states: The pervasive role of the military in dealing with severe challenges to internal security and threats to law and order has been a feature of our nation's approach to handling national crises. However, involvement of the military in ISOPs in Nigeria over the years has been at best controversial.

Two key concepts form the thrust of the subject matter of our discourse, namely the Military and Internal Security Operations (ISOPs). For the purpose of shared understanding, it is germane to define and contextualize these concepts so as to underscore their denotative meaning in the context of this presentation. This constitutes our next concern.

The Military

Simply, the military refers to the tripartite divisions of the profession of arms, viz; the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. Together, these institutions constitute the custodian of the national security of any nation. They are expected to work in complementary unison in the discharge of their duties towards ensuring the protection of the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Departmentalization of the military into three arms is a matter of technical specialization. In effect, the Army specializes in land soldiering, the Navy specializes in Sea soldiering, and the Air Force specializes in air soldiering. In spite of this technical specialization, the various arms of the military usually work in operational synergy in their major operations.

Internal Security Operations (ISOPs)

Internal Security Operations (ISOPs) refers to actions carried out by the domestic security agents, such as the Police, Customs Service, Immigration Service, and others, for the purpose of containing domestic threats to the security of the country (Nwolise, 2007:385). These threats often relate to dire cases of riots, demonstrations, strikes, communal clashes, terrorism, and the like, which normally fall outside the constitutional duty of the military. The involvement of the military in such security scenarios is necessitated when the situations are adjudged to have overwhelmed the police or other relevant public security agencies. Hence, if any of them overwhelms the police, the government can call out the military operating alone or jointly with the police to assist the government to bring the situation under quick control (Nwolise, 2007: 385). Military involvement in ISOPs is an aspect of what is known in the relevant literature as "Military Assistance to Civil Authority", which,

in essence, implies the deployment of one or more arms of the military tact alone or in concert with the other security agencies, such as the police, to help the government handle humanitarian crises or any conflict-related emergencies.

Challenges of Military Involvement in Conflict Resolution in Nigeria

From the standpoint of the cases and instances reviewed above, it is possible to identify some common challenges, excesses that are associated with military involvement in ISOPs in Nigeria. Note that these acts amount variously as breach of human rights, violation of the constitution, negation of ethical standards and professionalism of the military, as well as contravention of extant international laws. The excesses are highlighted below.

i. Excessive use of force:

This has been a common feature of military ISOPs in Nigeria. These operations have often been characterized by highhandedness, impunity, and collective judgment. In the case of Odi and Zaki Biam, men of the military simply descended on non-combatant villagers, killing and maiming them with impunity. Some of the casualties were innocent, law-abiding citizens of Nigeria, who were oblivious of the issue at stake. They merely became victims of the vindictive operation of the army, which was hell-bent on retaliation.

ii. Inhuman Treatments:

This has to do with the various degrading treatments unleashed against the populace by soldiers in the course of ISOPs. Examples include rape, extortion, torture, extra-judicial killings, looting of property, false accusation, deliberate humiliation, intimidation etc. For instance, at Odi and ZakiBiam, many young people were arrested and falsely accused of being masterminds of the killing of security personnel. At Onitsha, a number of youths were arrested and falsely accused of being members of MASSOB (Nwolise, 2007).

iv. Population Displacement:

In the cases of Odi and ZakiBiam, the entire villages were raided, leading to mass dislocation of families and attendant population displacement and internal refugee situation. In the recent incident at BarkinLadi in Plateau State, the villagers were forced to evacuate their traditional abodes and squat in an unfriendly and unhealthy environment in their immediate and remote neighborhoods. In fact, nothing can be more dehumanizing than this.

v. Use of Insulting Graffiti:

Soldiers often leave behind some written expressions on the walls of homes or commercial premises in their areas of operation. With particular reference to the Odi incident in Bayelsa State, Abert (2003: 15-17) documented a number of such expressions, some of which are reproduced below:

vi. Strategic Implications

The untoward conduct of the military in ISOPs in Nigeria over the years has a lot of implications for the military profession, for rule of law and constitutionalism, and for Nigeria's national security. In this subsection, an attempt is made to underscore some of these implications from the point of view of the cases under consideration.

Literature Review

According to Ahmad (2012) the military's brutal efficiency in suppressing internal challenges to security have left indelible marks in ZakiBiam, in Odi, in Maiduguri, in Kano, and in many other parts of the North today. In effect, the popular perception of military involvement in ISOPs in Nigeria has been one of deep-seated misgivings and anxiety. This paper correlates these misgivings and anxiety with the atrocities perpetrated by the misguided elements of the military in the discharge of ISOPs. Consequently, in an attempt to evaluate the strategic efficacy of the military role in ISOPs in contemporary Nigeria, the paper posits that the sundry excesses and atrocities perpetrated by soldiers in the process have tended to bastardize the essence of the endeavor.

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining both the quantitative and qualitative approaches to gather comprehensive data. The quantitative approach involved the use of structured questionnaires to collect numerical data from a large sample of respondents. The qualitative approach included in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to gain deeper insights into the experiences and perceptions of the participants regarding Military Personnel involvement in Conflict resolution.

Theoretical Framework

The classical theory of crime formed the basis of the study, and this was premised on the fact that man is a rational being who calculates all he wants to do and when he wants to do them. Furthermore, he calculates his gains and losses (pleasures and pains) of every action. For this reason classical theory of crime advocated that punishment must fit the crime. In this case, if punishment gives more pain than the pleasure which the criminal act would confer on the offender the tendency of he or she having a change of mind from criminal activities is certain, if this is done, it is believed that crime will be prevented by making punishment to have deterrent effect on the offenders and this will make crime to become unattractive. This theory is relevant to this study as it offers an explanation to law enforcement as to why people commit crimes. It also pointed to law enforcement agents that punishment would provide pains that are far greater than the pleasure to deter people from committing a crime. When crime is check through legislative means, which can specify punishment that should be clearly written and not subject to judicial interpretation.

Discussion and Findings

The data shows that a significant majority of respondents are aware of Military Personnel involvement in conflict resolution. This high level of awareness indicates that Military Personnel involvement in conflict resolution is high. However, the fact that a few respondents are unaware suggests that there is still room for improving outreach and communication strategies to ensure that all are aware of the involvement of Military personnel in conflict resolution.

The military is constitutionally mandated to assist the police and other security agencies in the maintenance of law and order, and curb crime and violent conflict. However, the term commonly known as military assistance in internal security operation is a mixture of both prospects and challenges. The prospects of the military in internal security can be seen in the quelling of ethno-religious crises in Jos, Niger Delta Militancy, Operation *Lifia dole* in Maiduguri and Yobe, to mention a few.

The challenges of this study are numerous, ranging from human rights violations, inhuman treatment, use of force, indiscriminate arrest, rape, looting, and extrajudicial killings, population displacement, as reported in the course of searching for a missing Brigadier General Alkali, as well as taking sides with a particular religious group, among others. To address this, the government has an enormous role to play to overhaul the military for utmost performance.

Conclusions

It is important that you understand the meaning of conflict, dispute settlement, conflict resolution, and the differences between the concepts. Special attention should be paid to the underlying causes of conflicts, especially in Africa. Note that during negotiations to the resolution of conflicts, each party come to the table ready to sacrifice certain advantages without which a resolution will be difficult. Oftentimes, failure to make sacrifices results in the intensification of conflict once the initial efforts at resolution fail. Overall, the co-operative approach against the competitive negotiation tactics should be encouraged.

Military assistance in internal security cannot be over emphasized as they are the custodian of national security and a symbol of unity. The role of the military in internal security has is a mixture of both prospects and challenges; these prospects and challenges were studied and observed in military operation code-named Operation Safe Haven Jos, Plateau (OPSH). Though some levels of success have been recorded in internal military assistance across the country but the widespread cases of human rights violations, use of lethal force, population displacement, as well as indiscriminate arrest and detention remain major challenges for the military in internal security operations. The government is therefore advised to overhaul the military in line with international best practices for lasting national peace and security.

Recommendations

1. The government should provide a viable legal framework to regulate the Military Personnel in internal security operations.
2. Military Personnel should be well-trained with modern security equipment to tackle and manage internal security crises.
3. The use of force, human rights violations inherent with the military in civil conflict should be addressed.
4. The police should be well-equipped to tackle most of the internal security challenges to avoid the military taking over the police job.
5. Civil-military relations should be promoted by the government for a cordial relationship.

6. Adequate legal punishment should be meted out for any soldier found wanting in unprofessional conduct or human rights violations.

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Interrogating Communal Conflict And Its Implication On Human Security In Tiv Nation Of Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract
Nigeria's current democratic dispensation has been engulfed by communal conflict. It has been a key impediment to human security and societal development. The key task of the study was to interrogate communal conflict in the Tiv Nation of Benue state, Nigeria, and accessing its implications on human security. The study employed the multi-causal model theory as an appropriate analytic tool. It employed a qualitative method of research which relied mainly on secondary data. The study found that the main causes of communal conflict in Tiv-Nation are: partisan politics, inappropriate conflict resolution approaches, proliferation of weapons and militias, heightened ethnic consciousness, and disputes over the location of development projects. Key implications identified include loss of human capital, restricted opportunities for future development, food insecurity, rising inflation, large numbers of internally displaced persons, and widespread social distrust. The study recommends discouraging antagonistic politics, including experts in conflict resolution, enforcing effective arms control and border security, fostering unity, adopting conflict-sensitive analysis, and involving stakeholders in decisions about development projects.
Keywords: Communal Conflict, Ethnic Consciousness, Human Security, Nation, Violent Conflict

Introduction

Every society has conflict, which arises from divergent viewpoints and opinions, and has been essential to social progress. Conflict is unquestionably a normal, necessary, unavoidable, and natural occurrence (Mavalla, 2016). Conflict can be constructive if it serves as a powerful catalyst for modernisation, such as advancing scientific understanding that advances humankind. Conversely, it can be destructive if it leads to extreme hostility, violence, and bloodshed (Dzurgba, 2010).

In the Niger Delta, the Northeast, and North-central states of Nigeria, communities have generally been prone to conflict of varying shades with obvious flashpoints. In Nigeria's democratic growth, the manifestations of electoral conflict, ethnic conflict, religious conflict, herder-farmer conflict, communal conflict, and indigene/settler conflict have become flagrant features. After the ethno-religious conflict, communal conflict has emerged as the most widespread of these conflicts.

Nigeria has seen a sharp rise in inter-communal violence since this democratic administration was established in 1999 (Olusola, 2003). According to Onwudiwe (2004), the prevalence of communal violence is one of democracy's most vexing disappointments, even though it has not been economically kind to a few Nigerians. No geopolitical region is immune to its unsightly shortcomings.

More communal conflicts have occurred in Northern Nigeria than in any other location, making it extremely difficult to have productive social interactions. An effective case study for analyzing the interaction of negative energies is Benue State, specifically the Tiv Nation. The Central African Bantu race is linked to the Tiv ethnic group. The central (Middle-Belt) region of Nigeria is home to this ethnic group (Iorshagher and Aande, 2022).

The Tiv Nation is located in the Lower Benue region and is shared with Udam of Cross River State to the south. It is bordered to the north by the Alago, Koro, and Angwe of Nassarawa State. The Jukum and Chamba of Taraba State occupy the east of the Tiv, while the Idoma and Igede of the same Benue and Igala of Kogi States share a western boundary with the Tiv (Iorshagher and Aande, 2022).

According to Aule and Bello (2022), the Tiv remains the most homogeneous tribe in Benue State. They make up fourteen of the twenty-three local governments that are dispersed throughout the Benue North-East Senatorial District (Zone A), which includes Buruku, Logo, Katsina-Ala, Konshisha, Kwande, Ukum, Ushongo, and Vandeikya local governments; and the Benue North-West Senatorial District (Zone B), which comprises Gboko, Guma, Gwer East, Gwer West, Makurdi, and Tarka local governments.

Like other ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Tiv Nation and its neighbours have not become proficient at the theory and practice of peaceful coexistence and how to implement effective conflict management techniques. This is the cause of the sporadic conflicts and crises in society. Human security is seriously threatened by the widespread of ethnic and communal disputes in the communities (Sundberg, Kristine and Joakim, 2012).

The danger posed by the intercommunal conflict is causing Tiv Nation to suffer in frightening proportions. One could argue that human security and socioeconomic growth have been sacrificed on the altar of insecurity and

underdevelopment, respectively, as a result of the increased level of violence in the community. Unfortunately, the community is now too unstable for productive social interactions due to communal conflict (Alimba, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

The Tiv Nation is the most resource-rich ethnic group in Benue State, which has a sizable area. Normally, Tiv Nation's large and fertile landmass should be a benefit since it can accelerate socioeconomic development, particularly in terms of space for agricultural activities. However, in recent years, the rise in violent conflict that was sparked by communal conflict has made the opposite seem true. This has impacted the safety of people and property in the various communities.

This unfortunate development is gradually retarding Tiv Nation growth, thus upsetting human security and the socioeconomic structure of the community. The development is bad for economic security, as the community's per capita income diminishes. As a result of incessant communal violence, thousands of people have been displaced. The loss of property and livestock is frightening, and thousands of lives have been lost. These result in a high death rate, an increase in communicable diseases, illiteracy, and famine, among other societal issues.

While there are lots of scholarly studies into communal conflict, most of them have focused on root causes of the communal conflict, its connection to food crises, security, and inter-group relations, challenges faced by internally displaced persons, and the like have increased dramatically in recent years, reflecting the issue's increased importance on the agendas of development organizations and policymakers. Of all the problems afflicting society, communal conflict as it relates to human security has received the least attention in peace and conflict studies.

Consequently, not many empirical studies have been carried out to establish the nexus between communal conflict and human security, thus creating a gap in knowledge. It is on this basis that this study is designed to systematically examine the connection between communal conflict and human security with particular reference to Tiv Nation, Benue State, Nigeria, in an attempt to find lasting solutions to the incessant communal conflict so that the society is protected, preserved, and the well-being of members is relatively guaranteed.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of the study is to examine the relationship between communal conflict and human security with special focus on Tiv Nation of Benue State, Nigeria, while the specific objectives are

1) To interrogate the fundamental causes of communal conflict in Tiv Nation of Benue state.
2) To access the impact of communal conflict in Tiv Nation of Benue State.
3) To identify the mechanism to manage the protracted communal conflict in Tiv Nation of Benue State

Conceptual Clarification

The two axiomatic terms "communal" and "conflict" combine to form "communal conflict." According to Shapiro (2006), conflict is a social interaction practice that involves a struggle for resources, power, position, views, preferences, and desires. The point is that unfair distribution of resources habitually ignites disagreements which, if left unaddressed can escalate to full-blown crises.

The word "communal" comes from the Latin communis, which means "common." Communal refers specifically to groups and includes items that a group in a culture uses, shares, or experiences on a regular basis. A social conflict involving one or more groups within a community is referred to as communal conflict. It is referred to as intra-communal conflict when it takes place within a community and inter-communal conflict when it happens between groups (Alimba, 2014). It is important to remember that these groups share social connections, which could lead to intense competition.

According to Oboh and Hyande (2006), communal conflict occurs when two or more groups disagree or commit violent acts over particular concerns, resulting in fatalities and property destruction. In any culture, this type of conflict arises because of a connection to share or utilize resources or elements, which can be either tangible or intangible. According to the Armed Violence Location and Event Dataset (ACLED) (2013), of all forms of violent interaction in Nigeria, communal violence has the highest number of fatalities per event.

Communal conflict is, therefore a situation in which victims are selected based on their ethnic group membership and violence is propagated across ethnic borders. It implies that ethnic or communal strife is essentially the same thing. This is not surprising, as a community or ethnicity is characterized by communality, which is defined as a phenomenon that is shared by a certain group. Conflict that involves members of community-based identity groupings is referred to as communal conflict. Usually, it is a result of collective identity.

As an identity conflict, communal conflict is "defined in ethnic, communal, regional or religious terms, either pitched against themselves in deadly confrontation, or against the central government" (Egwu, 2006). In heterogeneous societies, communal competitors are defined as culturally distinct individuals, tribes, or clans that own or want a portion of governmental authority. Nevertheless, communal friction is typically synonymous with ethnic conflict (Onwudiwe, 2004). The tendency of communal conflict to develop in recent times is closely linked to the type of social conditions that contribute to its occurrence.

Communal conflict is also a state of inconsistency that arises from a resource or property that is shared or utilized by a group or groups in a society. It occurs when two different groups in a society disagree about resources that are held and shared jointly because of the potential for unfair distribution or the issue of group dominance (Alimba, 2014). Communal conflict has taken on an intimidating and, mostly, violent stance. In the current democratic era, communal conflicts are extremely unstable, resulting in widespread destruction of material and human resources (ACLED, 2013).

Another characteristic that sets communal conflict apart is that the parties involved are typically non-state groups that are subjects of the same state (Elfversson, 2013). Kachii (2019) defined communal conflict as the battle between groups viewed as non-state actors seeking to win control of some disputed and believed indivisible resource, encapsulates this in a concise manner. Although a state may play a significant supportive role in a communal conflict, neither actor has power over the state. Similarly, none of the groups is officially recognized as a rebel group with the ability to use violence; rather, they are groups that only organize to fight on occasion.

Communal conflict can occasionally be difficult to distinguish, because it can take many different forms, which its identification is quite ambiguous. Unlike other conflicts, communal disputes entail status, culture, identity, and value in addition to material resources. Its widespread presence across Nigerian society has made the situation more unstable. Consequently, identifying communal conflicts is a crucial step in determining what, how, and when to take action to stop their harmful tendencies at a given moment.

Security is a broad concept, that any attempt to restrict it will cause the concept to lose its focus (Adedeji, 2022). In a simpler and comprehensive nature, security is defined as freedom from threat, danger, wants, vulnerability, anxiety, etc. (Kempen, 2013). According to Akinade (2008), as paraphrased, security may means freedom from threats such as financial wants, attack, crime, espionage, accident, and conspiracy in its social, economic, and political interpretation proportionately.

Security has moved beyond pre-Cold War understanding, which restricted it to aggression. With the idea that security is more than just the absence of conflict, the definition of security has been expanded to include human security. The term "human security" refers to a state's physical limits being safe and secure. The fundamental ideas of the 1994 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the human development report that will continue to influence the human security debate, are:

- its joint focus on "freedom from fear" and "freedom from wants, and
- its four emphases on universality, interdependence, prevention, and people-centeredness.

It has been established that the lasting and durable peace requires a comprehensive vision of security which includes, but is not limited to education, health, democracy, human rights, protection against environmental degradation and the proliferation of deadly weapons, among others (Mijah, 2007, cited in Fayeye, 2011). Security is not possible where there is a manifestation of injustices, hunger, poverty, ignorance, and crime, among others (Adedeji, 2022).

To elucidate human security, Kofi Annan, one-time United Nations Secretary-General, presented a broad definition of human security thus:

> "it embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfill his or her potential. Every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict. Freedom from wants, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment, these are the interrelated building blocks of human and therefore national security" (Annan 2000).

Human security encompasses more than just the issue of survival; it also includes meeting one's basic need. Additionally, it is focused on matters pertaining to life quality. Only by safeguarding the empowerment of the human security structure can the objectives of freedom from fear and wants be achieved. State and citizen freedom from widespread risks like poverty, illiteracy, violence, and crime, among others, should be part of complete security. Since human security continues to be a nation-state's benchmark for well-being, it is inviolable.

Theoretical Framework

By developing a theory that explains why communal conflicts in Tiv Nation, Benue state, turn violent, the study's main goal is to gain a better understanding of the causes of these conflicts. In light of this, the study used the multi-causal model as a suitable analytical method to investigate how the components of communal conflict interact in Tiv Nation. The theory is useful because it enables a more thorough integration of the "syndrome of factors" that may make a given situation more likely to be violent (Mason and Rychard, 2005).

The multi-causal model of analysis starts with a review of the factors that contribute to communal conflict in the Tiv land, such as immediate, remote, and precipitating factors. Given the diversity of these components of community conflict, any meaningful response design and mobilization must take into account how these components interact to either increase or weaken the conditions that support and sustain peace.

Accordingly, the multi-causal theory in the context of this study implies that communal conflict in Tiv Nation is the result of numerous factors. Consequently, the causation element of this model indicates the necessity of determining the probable causes of communal conflict from a variety of angles. This further supports the idea that Tiv Nation contains intrinsic conflict aspects, which may be structural, political, cultural, religious, ecological/geographical, and sociological, much like in a number of other contexts.

When the inevitable interaction of these components is taken into account, the causal nature of this paradigm becomes even more evident. Violence is likely to occur, for example, when a religiously sensitive setting interacts with a divided political context. Therefore, the multi-causal theory is thought to be suitable for identifying probable components of communal conflict and elucidating how these components may interact to either strengthen or weaken peace in the Tiv-Nation, Benue State, Nigeria.

Materials and Method

The method adopted by the study is a qualitative approach due to its historical nature. Hence, the method relied mainly on secondary sources of data collection and analysis. The secondary source of data collection includes current works on the theme of the research, comprising textbooks, journals, magazines, conference papers, newspapers, and works of distinguished academics of the subject matter, among other related documents.

In presenting and analysing the work, a chronological and thematic presentation of data was adopted in line with its historical approach. The reality of the topic under review affects both human security and social relations in the current Nigerian political dispensation, and this has been systematically examined. The study has consequently drawn understandings from the approaches of conflict management.

Result and Discussion

Linking Human Security to Communal Conflict and Its Implications on Development

The imposition of increased security threats in Nigeria is the primary cause of communal violence. Human security is a state in which people's needs are satisfied and taken care of in a society. Security is one of the social indices that determines the safety and well-being of people and their property. According to Nwankwo (2013), security is a state of well-founded confidence and the absence of worry or uncertainty.

The lack of threats to acquire values and the absence of worry that such values may be assaulted are both considered subjective and objective indices of security. Human security is crucial for a broader development goal because human security and human development are intertwined. Values are the material and immaterial components that people and organizations believe are essential to enhancing their well-being (Alimba, 2014).

Nigeria's human security is still in jeopardy due to its unequal political, social, and economic structures. Human security is at risk at every stage of the process of social group, economic, and political fragmentation. Poverty, unemployment, hunger, health risks, environmental degradation, discrimination, and excessive inequality are the main causes of economic insecurity and undermine the security of many Nigerians. Consequently, fear arises when people's values are not fulfilled, and fear is the architect of insecurity.

The idea of human security has gained popularity due to the state's incapacity to battle threats to humanity in the modern world and avoid anxiety. Communal violence around the world poses a serious threat to human security. Communal conflict compromises base security because it is more practical in the rural environment, which is an essential component of every society. People have felt more insecure after the return to democracy in 1999 due to more documented communal crises (Alimba, 2014).

Benue State is facing significant security challenges as a result of the escalating wave of communal conflicts, particularly in Tiv Nation where these conflicts are destructive and widely visible. The increased level of insecurity has had an impact on social, economic, political, and material resources. Insecurity is the biggest problem brought on by experiences with communal catastrophes in society. Crime, unemployment, poverty, low

living standards, and other vices have all increased as a result, which has slowed down the region's democratic dividends and developmental tendency (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013).

The destruction of already limited resources has further made it more difficult for the rival groups to divide resources fairly. The unity, cohesiveness, and integration of the state's social structure have been put in jeopardy by the issues brought on by insecurity as a result of inter-communal conflict in the Tiv Nation. People's behaviours, attitudes, and orientations have been impacted by the pervasive security threats both directly and indirectly, to the point that they are engaging in inappropriate behaviours as a means of survival.

Social repercussions of insecurity have resulted in a shift in the lifestyles of Tiv citizens, which has altered the social behaviour patterns of the various groups. The signs of social development have been lost as a result of the rapid depletion of the components of unity in the social environment. Emina (2020) noted a few effects of violence on Nigerian social development that are relevant to the Tiv ethnic group, including:

1) Armed conflicts continue to violently upend the social structure, and social cohesion is eroding.
2) The nation's law and order is still being disrupted by ethnic conflicts.
3) The religious allegiances that split Nigerian culture, especially between the North and the South.
4) Political conditions continue to be tense, which contributes to social and political instability.
5) Nigeria's ongoing violence has had a negative impact on the nation's economic progress.

The Nature and Dynamics of Communal Conflict in Tiv Nation of Benue State

The commercial activities of Tiv as an agrarian society revolve around agricultural produce such as yams, rice, soya beans, cassava, flour, groundnut and maize, among others (Obademi, Chagba and Omale, 2023). The geographical insight of the society revealed that it is rich in minerals like zinc, lead, barytes, glass sand, clay and limestone. It also holds a bright prospect for tourism attractions.

Instances of intra-communal and inter-communal crises involving the Tiv people have been documented in a number of studies in the past. Several cases were likely overlooked because they were unaware of them, and since the studies were carried out, many more have been reported. It is necessary to investigate the incidence, severity, and persistence of community crises in Tiv Nation since they demand careful consideration.

The Tiv Nation's communal crises are caused by the competition for farmland and the overuse of resources associated with it. As a result, the modes of economic production and distribution that are used in society are connected to the crises. Land, the primary means of production in pre-colonial Tiv civilization, was owned by all. Together, they engaged in farming, hunting, and fishing, and the profits were distributed fairly and without exploitation. The administration was gerontocratic, while the society was egalitarian (Hembe, 2000, cited in Aule and Bello, 2022).

It was comparatively simple to resolve conflicts such that they did not escalate to the point where they typically turn into crises that impede the peace, the economy, or the advancement of one or more of the groups involved. As a result, land disputes were comparatively rare in pre-colonial Tiv society with its communal method of production. When disagreements did arise, they were typically resolved by established dispute resolution procedures like the "Orya" (village chief) or the "Mbakwav" (age grade) (Fater, 2005).

Tiv-related conflicts had become sporadic and destructive due to the involvement of colonial rule established new borders, new farming techniques, new crops like citrus trees, and other elements of the capitalist economy that have since continued to weaken the foundation of communalism. The attempts to privatize formerly communal lands by politicians, retired civil servants, and ex-servicemen have not improved the situation (Aule, 2015). Tiv farmers and their neighbours' infringement on other people's farmland leads to intense combat to preserve these farmlands (Aule and Bello, 2022).

The non-Tiv were essentially fishing settlements during the colonial era hence, they were not specifically interested in the fertile farmlands. While the Tiv provided yams to make pounded yam dishes, the non-Tiv tribes provided fish. As a result, the connection was cordial at the time (Ahu, 2006). In the pre-colonial era, the number of intra- and inter-ethnic crises was decreased by the conventional crisis management techniques that were in place.

Due to the declining fishing industry in recent years, non-Tiv people have also resorted to farming as a source of income. However, their attempts to expand their farmlands frequently result in the encroachment of Tiv farmlands, which in turn causes the current communal crises in the Tiv Nation (Aule, 2015). In addition, the majority of Tiv men and women struggle annually to own larger farms, which leads to increased friction over land acquisition.

Conflict over the locations of hospitals and local market squares is also among other issues that fuel communal strife. The worst part is that even after being educated and gainfully employed in the federal and state agencies,

they return home to acquire more land than their families are entitled to, in order to experiment with mechanised farming and the construction of luxury castles.

The majority of land disputes in Tiv villages were also influenced by traditional rulers. They asserted that they must receive large compensation because they are of a "royal birth" from Tiv forebears (Utov, 2000). Therefore, they freely give land that belongs to families under their control to wealthy individuals on a large scale. The rulers are also content to act as fronts for the government, which uses them to uphold law and order. Frequently, the truth is kept silent regarding land issues in order to further their own selfish and personal agendas.

Causes of Communal Conflict in the Tiv Nation of Benue State

Scholars have identified a number of elements that contribute to communal violence in Tiv land. The reasons for intercommunal disputes are dynamic and vary depending on the situation (Yecho, 2006). The study highlighted the following as primary causes of communal conflict in the Tiv Nation, Benue State:

1) **Partisan Politics**: Politics is one of the main causes of crises in the Tiv Nation. Best (2006) asserts that politics entails leadership and competition for open political positions in a community. The First Republic's "Nande" (fire blazing) and "Atemtyo" (head smashing) crises were blatant instances of violent politics. Since then, violence has continued to be a prominent feature of Tiv politics, which are now defined by factions based on personality traits (Aule, 2015). Instead of seeing politics as a game of influence and numbers, devoid of rancour, elite's manipulation has always been the case (Aule and Bello, 2022). Added to this is the traditional chieftaincy tussle imminent in Tiv communities.
2) **Environmental Stress:** It can be established that grazing has placed pressure on the environment and has often resulted in violent conflict in the Tiv Nation. According to Ugwumba (2018), competition over grazing land and scarce resources has, over the years, resulted in recurrent violent conflicts between the indigenous Tiv farmers and the Fulani herders. The tendency of herders to occupy the farmland of the Tiv Nation for grazing upsurges daily with highly sophisticated weapons (Ubelejit, 2016). Herders' perpetuated violence has been affirmed to be the second-highest security challenge in Nigeria (Ubelejit, 2016).
3) **Wrong Conflict Resolution Strategy:** The intractability of communal conflicts in Tiv-Nation can also be ascribed to defective methods adopted by the conflict resolution committee. Often majority of the committee is not conflict experts. Hence, they are capacity deficiency to handling the situation. In addition, the political, ethnic and religious sentiments that motivate the choice of handling strategy negatively affect the management of communal conflict. Alimba (2014) affirmed that communal violence persisted in the Tiv Nation due largely to the wrong approach.
4) **Massive Influx of Weapons and Militias:** It is imperative to assert that another communal conflict aider in the Tiv Nation is the ease and frequency with which weapons and militias/terrorist groups find their way into Benue State. Report from the media also states that there is ample evidence to show that some weapons used in some communal clashes, and even for armed robbery, were sourced from the government military armory of some volatile neighbouring countries (Tell Magazine, 2000 in Onimajesin, 2011). The government amnesty programme aimed at mopping up the unlawful circulation of arms from the state is yet to achieve any significant result.
5) **Ethnic/Tribal Consciousness:** One of the main causes of intercommunal strife in Tiv is ethnic/tribal consciousness. It causes the Tiv communities to become more internally vigilant and to partially stop their developmental enterprise. Issues pertaining to one ethnic group's marginalization, exploitation, envy, and deprivation might be connected to this ethnic consciousness (Best, 2006). Communal conflict has frequently been sparked by people's resistance to threats to their immediate clan and their allegiance to it. Both parties become subjugated and impoverished as a result of the devastation that follows such an action (Utov, 2000).
6) **Challenges in Siting of Developmental Projects:** The Tiv project placement has frequently led to violent conflicts. When MTN, a telecom service provider, was scheduled to erect its mast at Mbanyan, there was a violent altercation that left many seriously injured. Violent protests against the move of the Gbor Yam Market also resulted in property damage and fatalities. Due to a lack of conflict-sensitive analysis and stakeholder involvement in the society development project siting, conflicts of this kind are common. Conflicts brought on by the politics of project idea, location, and implementation frequently put the area at risk for preventable conflicts (Obi, 2018).

Effects of Communal Conflicts in Tiv-Land, Benue State

The vicious trends of communal conflicts have largely affected the prospect of Tiv-Nation. A few of the consequences are highlighted below:

1. Human capital is an irreparable and irreplaceable asset that has been negatively affected by the long years of communal conflicts. Few hands are available for labour due to the sharp decline in population brought about by the heartless and unrepentant waste of human lives. People are being needlessly wasted as a result of a high sense of insecurity, in addition to crops being destroyed (Otokpa, 2013). In order to assist the police in defending the villages against impending invasion, young adults who should be working on worthwhile projects are compelled to take up emergency vigilante work. Communal conflict has therefore adversely affected the human capital of not only Tiv communities but the entire Benue State and Nigeria as a whole.
2. Communal conflict has been identified as an impediment to a better future, and more to a worse future. For the betterment of any country in the future, the education of children is sacrosanct (Adedeji, 2024). Unfortunately, the future of children in Tiv society is in jeopardy due to incessant communal violence. During communal conflict, many schools were burnt down, while many were forced to close down, many children were forced to migrate to peaceful areas, and thus, education came to a standstill in the society. It implies that productive hours are lost and that opportunities for formal education or skill development become fiction. Interruption of education through habitual closing down of schools inevitably affects the children, Tiv, and national development.
3. Communal conflict has also hampered the ability of the Tiv, Benue State to flourish since it frequently results in the wanton destruction of both public and private property. To buttress this, Alimba (2014) reported destruction of farms, houses, and abduction of women in a violent clash incident between Buruku and Katsina-Ala on May 3, 2005, over ownership of a piece of land. Every time it occurs, the community's chances of development regress because it reduces the possibility of capital flight, investment, and human migration to safer areas.
4. Apart from the callous destruction of lives and properties, some primary social amenities, such as hospitals and electricity gadgets, were destroyed in the process. Among the social instability consequences of the communal conflict that were seen as crucial issues in the communities' lives was a decrease in the family's access to health care. Additionally, the electricity supply, which would have improved production activities, is epileptic due to vandalism of the supply line.
5. Every farmer in every community in Tiv seems to share the same sense of anger and powerlessness. Yams, cassava, rice, and cocoa-yams were the main food crops grown in TivNation's affluent rural villages prior to the rise of inter-communal contention. Economic activities were disrupted when the fighting forced the majority of producers to leave their homes in the satellite settlements where they worked in agriculture. According to Oboh and Hyande (2006), it has a significant detrimental impact on food security, price of goods and services, exacerbating the pre-existing food issues and their related problems of malnutrition and extreme poverty. In violent conflict situations, social insecurity is a prevalent symptom.
6. The creation of humanitarian challenges like the internally displaced persons is another drawback of inter-communal violence. According to Olusola (2003), an unmanageable number of internally displaced persons have been created as a result of multiple violent conflicts. It is possible that some of the localities had fewer refugees during the conflict. Many Tiv members were also evacuated from their ancestral homes, which left them harbouring intense animosity toward their rivals. Due to the migration of vulnerable members to other cities and villages for safety, the majority of families have been split up. It was one of the most significant consequences of conflict, as asserted, which places a great deal of strain on the government or the impacted populations.
7. Division and animosity shattered Tiv-Nation brought about by the intra-communal conflict. According to Adorowa (2022), social mistrust is the result of communal conflict since the resentment that develops during the crisis contributes significantly to the long-term development of social mistrust between members of the disputing groups. The same people who used to be associates are now wary of one another. Sadly, many friendships were severed and marriages destroyed. The social life of societies has likewise been broken up.

Conclusion

Communal conflict has done great damage to the Tiv federation. Its occurrence has been persistent since the beginning of the present democratic setting. Its concomitant effects have been the distortion of the human

security and development prospect of Tiv Nation with extension to Benue state and Nigeria as a whole. The study argued that no region of the country is immune to communal conflict. It provided a clear analysis of communal conflict in the Tiv Nation, linking it with human security.

The paper identified the causes of communal conflict in the Tiv Nation as multi-causal. This is vindicated by the multi-causal theory chosen for the study. According to the theory, communal conflict in the Tiv Nation is a product of a multiplicity of factors. The study held that essential communal conflict origins of the Tiv Nation could be structural, political, cultural, and ecological, among others. It has held the whole Tiv Nation down, such that development has been elusive and human security threats.

Recommendations

Having comprehensively carried out the study, a number of factors were identified as responsible for incessant communal conflict in Tiv-land. The following recommendations were therefore made.

1) Playing the politics of bitterness should be shunned. People ought to be taught that politics is a game of influence, numbers and civility. Elites should learn using politics to develop Tiv-land instead of fractionalising it for their selfish political ambition.
2) The government should introduce the ranching method of rearing animals across Tiv Nation and ban the grazing method to avoid regular violent conflict due to environmental stress. This will reduce perennial violent conflicts involving the farmers and herders.
3) The government should also take a long-term approach to reducing inter-communal conflicts by enlisting experts in conflict resolution, creating early warning systems, and implementing peace education that is appropriate for addressing inter-communal conflict in order to stop it from getting worse. Training people in the act of conflict resolution is also fundamental.
4) Proper arms control measure and border security is highly recommended to guide against the massive influx of weapons and militias into the Tiv-land. Government armory across the nation should be secured to guard against theft, while the illegal use of sophisticated weapons should be banned.
5) Unity and peace should be the watchword of sections of different nations occupying Tiv-land with the aim of internal cohesion. The slogan should be 'united we stand'. Unity of purpose will allay the fear of domination by one group against another. Diversity should also be considered as strength.
6) There should be conflict sensitive analysis and involvement of stakeholders in the siting of developmental projects across the Tiv-land. Needs rather than political motivation should be the major consideration of project conception, location and its implementation either by the donor or the government.

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Effect of Simulation And Project-Based Learning Methods on Academic Performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Civic Education, Kogi State, Nigeria

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Abstract
This study investigates the effects of simulation and project-based learning (PBL) strategies on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Civic Education in Kogi State, Nigeria. Grounded in constructivist theory, which advocates learner-centered approaches, the study employed a quasi-experimental design involving three public junior secondary schools selected for their curricular and policy similarities to ensure valid comparison. A total of 135 students participated, evenly distributed by gender and randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Instructional interventions included simulation, PBL, and traditional lecture methods. Data were collected through achievement tests and questionnaires, and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The findings revealed that students taught using simulation and PBL methods outperformed those in the traditional lecture group. Female students demonstrated slightly higher achievement than male students in the experimental groups. These results affirm the efficacy of interactive instructional methods in improving academic outcomes in Civic Education
Keywords: Civic education, simulation, project-based learning, academic performance, and strategies

Introduction

Civic Education plays a pivotal role in shaping students' understanding of societal issues, historical events, and civic responsibilities. Civic Education explores the various dimensions, goals, methods, and outcomes associated with educating individuals to be informed, engaged, and responsible citizens (Okoro, 2019). It encompasses research and scholarly works that delve into the theoretical foundations, historical evolution, and practical applications of Civic Education. However, the persistent challenge of poor academic performance among students in social studies within the Dekina Local Government Area (LGA) of Kogi State presents a pressing concern for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders alike. However, the adoption of simulation and project based methods in the teaching and learning of civic education among students of junior secondary schools in Kogi state could help improve learning performance.

Simulation, as a teaching strategy, involves the creation of an interactive environment that actively engages students intellectually, emotionally, and socially (Opara, 2023). It aims to cultivate curiosity, encourage critical thinking, and promote active student participation. Through exposure to real-life scenarios, structured discussions, and hands-on activities, simulation fosters a learning atmosphere that extends beyond rote memorization. It encourages students to apply concepts and principles of Civic Education in meaningful ways, thereby deepening their understanding and enhancing knowledge retention. Given its potential to transform passive learning into an engaging, student-centered experience, the use of simulation in teaching Civic Education is a promising area for further research. Coulter (2019) emphasized the importance of interactive strategies like simulation in influencing student performance, making it a subject worthy of continued academic attention and classroom integration.

The concept of simulation method refers to an approach or technique used to actively engage and motivate individuals or groups in order to facilitate learning, development, or simulation. The simulation method aims to create an environment that encourages participants to explore, experiment, and think critically, fostering their cognitive, emotional, and social growth (Olukosi, 2022). The simulation method is often used in educational settings, but it can also be applied in various other contexts, such as training programs, team-building exercises, therapy sessions, and creative simulation processes. The key idea behind the simulation method is to provide individuals with opportunities to actively participate, discover, and construct knowledge through hands-on experiences. Participants are actively involved in the learning or simulation process, rather than being passive recipients of information. They may be encouraged to ask questions, explore different possibilities, or participate in discussions and activities (Awodun, 2020).

The simulation method often incorporates real-life scenarios or practical applications to enhance the participants' understanding and connection to the subject matter. This can help individuals see the relevance and

applicability of what they are learning or experiencing. The simulation method emphasizes learning through direct experience (Svinicki, 2019. Participants engage in hands-on activities, simulations, role-playing, or experiments, allowing them to learn by doing and reflecting on their experiences. The simulation method encourages participants to think critically, analyze information, and apply their knowledge and skills to solve problems or address challenges. It promotes independent thinking, creativity, and the ability to approach situations from different perspectives.

The simulation method seeks to ignite participants' curiosity, motivation, and enthusiasm for the subject or activity (Awodun, 2020). It aims to create an engaging and enjoyable learning environment that encourages active participation and self-directed learning. The simulation method often incorporates multiple sensory modalities, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, to enhance learning and engagement. By appealing to different senses, participants can process information in a more holistic and immersive manner. The simulation method frequently involves collaboration and interaction among participants. Group discussions, cooperative learning activities, and team projects are often utilized to encourage peer-to-peer learning, communication, and the development of social skills (Opara, 2023). The simulation method emphasizes the importance of providing timely and constructive feedback to participants. Feedback helps individuals understand their progress, identify areas for improvement, and make adjustments in their learning or simulation strategies. Reflection activities also play a role in the simulation method, allowing participants to evaluate their experiences, insights, and learning outcomes.

The simulation method recognizes the diverse needs, interests, and abilities of participants. It aims to provide personalized and differentiated learning experiences that cater to individual strengths and challenges (Coulter, 2019). This can involve adapting the content, pace, or instructional strategies to suit the unique requirements of each participant. The simulation method allows for flexibility and adaptability in its implementation. Educators or facilitators may modify the approach based on the participants' responses, interests, or specific learning goals. This flexibility enables customization and optimization of the learning process to meet the evolving needs of the participants. The simulation method often encourages participants to transfer their learning to real-world situations. It aims to equip individuals with practical skills, simulation abilities, and critical thinking capacity that can be applied beyond the immediate learning context (Akinsola, 2022). This promotes the integration of knowledge and skills into individuals' everyday lives and future endeavors. The simulation method is a dynamic and learner-centered approach that seeks to create an active and immersive learning experience. It prioritizes engagement, critical thinking, collaboration, and application to foster deeper understanding, skill development, and overall growth.

The concept of the project-based method is an instructional approach that centers on students engaging in real-world projects or activities to learn and apply knowledge and skills. It is an active and hands-on learning approach that promotes deeper understanding, critical thinking, simulation, and collaboration. Students work on projects that reflect real-world challenges or scenarios, allowing them to see the relevance and applicability of their learning (Effiandi & Zanaton, 2022). Projects can be interdisciplinary and involve multiple subject areas, enabling students to connect and integrate knowledge from various domains. Students engage in inquiry and investigation as they explore and seek solutions to authentic problems or questions. They formulate their own research questions, gather information, analyze data, and draw conclusions, fostering a sense of ownership and autonomy in their learning process. Students take an active role in the project, becoming creators and problem solvers rather than passive recipients of information. They collaborate with peers, brainstorm ideas, make decisions, and apply their skills and knowledge to develop and execute the project (Akinsola, 2022).

Students learn project management skills, such as setting goals, creating timelines, allocating resources, and monitoring progress. They develop organizational and time management abilities as they navigate the different phases of the project, from planning and implementation to evaluation (Omoyemi, 2023). The project-based method promotes the integration of various skills and content areas. Students not only apply subject-specific knowledge but also develop skills in communication, critical thinking, teamwork, creativity, and simulation. They learn to apply these skills in a meaningful context, enhancing their understanding and ability to transfer knowledge to different situations. Assessment in the project-based method focuses on both process and product. Students are evaluated on their engagement, collaboration, research skills, simulation strategies, and the quality of their final project or presentation (Ogunsaju, 2020). Reflection activities help students analyze their learning, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and make connections between their project experiences and broader learning goals.

Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to examine the effects of simulation and project-based learning methods on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Civic Education in Kogi State. By exploring the impact of these two instructional strategies, the research aims to contribute valuable

insights into effective, inclusive educational practices that can enhance learning outcomes for all students, regardless of gender.

The justification for this investigation stems from the critical role that Civic Education plays in fostering informed and engaged citizens. Given the alarming underperformance in this subject, it is essential to explore teaching methodologies that can effectively engage students and enhance their learning outcomes. Traditional methods may no longer suffice in meeting the educational needs of today's learners, who require more interactive and practical approaches to grasp complex concepts. By exploring innovative teaching methods, educators can potentially transform the learning experience, leading to improved academic performance and a greater understanding of civic responsibilities among students. While there is a growing body of literature on the effectiveness of innovative teaching methodologies in various subjects, there is a notable gap concerning their application specifically within Civic Education in the context of Dekina Local Government Area. Prior research has not adequately investigated how simulation and project-based learning can directly influence academic performance in this subject. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by providing empirical evidence on the impact of these alternative teaching strategies on students' performance in Civic Education, thereby contributing valuable insights for educators and policymakers in the region.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of simulation and project-based learning methods on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Civic Education in Kogi State. By focusing on these two factors, the study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine the effect of the simulation method on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Civic Education in the Dekina LGA, Kogi State.
2. To determine the effect of the project-based learning method on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Civic Education in the Dekina LGA, Kogi State.
3. To find out the joint interaction effect of simulation and project-based learning method on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Civic Education in the Dekina LGA, Kogi State

Research Questions

The following research questions were drawn to guide the study:

1. What is the performance mean score of junior secondary school students taught Civic Education using the simulation method and those taught with the conventional method?
2. What is the performance mean score of junior secondary school students taught Civic Education using the project-based learning method and those taught with the conventional method?
3. What are the joint interaction performance mean scores of the simulation and project-based learning method of junior secondary school students in Civic Education?

Research Hypotheses

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the performance mean score of junior secondary school students taught Civic Education with the simulation method and those taught with the conventional method.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the performance mean score of junior secondary school students taught Civic Education with the project-based learning method and those taught with the conventional method.

Ho_3: There is no significant difference in the joint interaction performance mean score of simulation, project-based learning and the conventional method of junior secondary school students in Civic Education.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised all junior secondary school II students (JSS 2) in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State. Two thousand one hundred and fifty-four (2,154), which included one thousand one hundred and twenty-seven (1,127) male students and one thousand and twenty-seven (1,027) female students in Kogi State, was used for the study. A total of one hundred and eighty (180) students and this constitute the sample of this study. The Civic Education Academic Performance Test (CEAPT) was used to assess the academic performance of junior secondary school students. It consists of two sections. The first part (Section A) seeks the background information from respondents. The second part (Section B) consisted of forty (40) multiple-choice objective test items with four options per item, which were pooled from various past questions obtained from the Civic Education, which was also subjected to an expert in Test Construction. To ascertain the reliability of the CEAPT split half mentioned was used. From the responses of the 20 students, discriminating and difficulty indices were used to reduce the

items to forty (40) items. Forty (40) items were retained and split into two of odd and even numbers. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Kudar-Richardson formula 20. The reliability coefficient based on Kudar-Richardson formula 20 was 0.89.

Results of the Findings

What is the performance mean score of junior secondary school students taught Civic Education using the simulation method and those taught with the conventional method?

Pretest and Posttest performance mean score of students taught with Simulation Conventional Methods

Group	N	Pre-test $\bar{X}$	SD	Post-test $\bar{X}$	SD	Mean Gained Scores	Mean different
Simulation method	91	**38.60**	3.97	**62.90**	4.59	**24.30**	**14.07**
Conventional method	89	*20.32*	4.97	*30.55*	4.40	*10.23*	

The data presented in Table 4.1 shows a significant difference in the performance mean scores of junior secondary school students taught Civic Education using the simulation method compared to those taught with the conventional method. The simulation method group had a pre-test mean score of 38.60, which increased to a post-test mean of 62.90, reflecting a mean gain of 24.30 points. In contrast, the conventional method group started with a pre-test mean of 20.32 and achieved a post-test mean of 30.55, resulting in a mean gain of only 10.23 points. The standard deviations indicate relatively similar variability in scores within both groups. This implies that the simulation method not only enhances student engagement but is also more effective in improving learning outcomes in Civic Education compared to traditional teaching methods. The substantial difference in mean gains suggests the importance of adopting more interactive teaching strategies to foster better academic performance among students.

Research Question 2

What is the performance mean score of junior secondary school students taught Civic Education using the project-based learning method and those taught with the conventional method?

Pretest and Posttest performance mean score of students taught with project-based learning and those with the Conventional Method.

Group	N	Pre-test $\bar{X}$	SD	Post-test $\bar{X}$	SD	Mean Gained Scores	Mean different
Project-Based Learning	93	**34.35**	8.99	**51.31**	6.41	**16.96**	**9.77**
Conventional Method	87	23.76	10.99	30.95	8.54	7.19	

Table 4.2 illustrates the performance mean scores of junior secondary school students in Civic Education, comparing those taught using project-based learning to those taught with the conventional method. The project-based learning group had a pre-test mean score of 34.35, which rose to a post-test mean of 51.31, resulting in a mean gain of 16.96 points. Conversely, the conventional method group started with a pre-test mean of 23.76 and achieved a post-test mean of 30.95, leading to a mean gain of only 7.19 points. The standard deviations indicate greater variability in the conventional method group. This data suggests that project-based learning significantly enhances students' academic performance in Civic Education compared to traditional approaches. The higher mean gain in the project-based learning group implies that engaging students in hands-on, collaborative projects not only fosters deeper understanding but also improves overall learning outcomes, reinforcing the need for innovative teaching strategies in education.

Research Question 3

What are the joint interaction performance mean scores of simulation, project-based learning and the conventional method of junior secondary school students in Civic Education?

Table 4.3: Pretest and Posttest performance mean scores of simulation and project-based learning method of junior secondary school students in Civic Education

Group	N	Pre-test $\bar{X}$	SD	Post-test $\bar{X}$	SD	Mean Gained Scores	Mean different
Simulation method	60	38.60	3.97	62.90	4.59	24.30	More effective

Project-based learning	60	34.35	8.99	51.31	6.41	16.96
Conventional method	60	20.32	4.97	30.55	4.40	10.23

The data presented in Table 4.3 compares the effectiveness of the three different teaching methods; Simulation, Project-Based Learning, and the Conventional Methods; by measuring students' pre-test and post-test scores. In this analysis, the Simulation and Project-Based Learning methods are considered experimental groups 1 and 2, while the Conventional Method serves as the control group. The Simulation Method emerged as the most effective instructional approach. Students who were taught using this method had a mean pre-test score of 38.60, which increased significantly to 62.90 in the post-test, this result in a gained score of 24.30. Additionally, the standard deviation of post-test scores (4.59) suggests that students' performance was relatively consistent, indicating a strong and uniform impact of the method. This high learning gain highlights the effectiveness of simulation-based teaching in enhancing students' understanding and retention of knowledge.

Project-Based Learning, while also an experimental approach, showed moderate effectiveness compared to the Simulation Method. Students in this group had a mean pre-test score of 34.35, which improved to 51.31 in the post-test, resulting in a gained score of 16.96. Though this method demonstrated a substantial improvement, its effectiveness was lower than that of the Simulation Method. The higher standard deviation of pre-test scores (8.99) indicates greater variability in students' initial knowledge levels, while the post-test standard deviation (6.41) suggests some continued dispersion in learning outcomes. In contrast, the Conventional Method, which served as the control group, yielded the lowest learning gains. The pre-test mean score for this group was 20.32, which increased to only 30.55 in the post-test, resulting in a gained score of 10.23. The relatively small improvement in scores suggests that traditional teaching methods are significantly less effective in promoting deep learning. The standard deviation values (4.97 for pre-test and 4.40 for post-test) indicate limited variation in students' performance, reflecting the method's inability to create significant academic progress.

In summary, the findings indicate that modern, interactive teaching strategies, particularly the Simulation Method, lead to greater learning improvements compared to traditional approaches. Project-Based Learning also shows promise as an effective instructional method, though its impact is slightly less pronounced than that of simulation. The Conventional Method, by contrast, appears to be the least effective, reinforcing the need for more engaging and student-centered teaching techniques to enhance learning outcomes.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the performance mean score of junior secondary school students taught Civic Education with the simulation method and those taught with the conventional method

Table 5: ANCOVA on the mean rating of those taught with the simulation method and the conventional method towards their Civic Education in Kogi State

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: person

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	8242.011a	7	4121.005	104.676	.000
Intercept	7412.684	1	7412.684	188.286	.000
Convention	439.391	1	439.391	11.161	.001
Simulation method	7547.785	6	7547.785	191.717	.000
Error	13424.940	175	39.369		
Total	799623.000	180			
Corrected Total	21666.951	179			

a. R Squared = .206 (Adjusted R Squared = .185)

Table 5 presents the results of an ANCOVA analysis examining the difference in performance mean scores of junior secondary school students taught Civic Education using the simulation method versus those taught with the conventional method. The analysis shows a significant effect of the teaching method on students' performance scores, as indicated by the F-value of 191.717 with a p-value of .000 for the simulation method, and 11.161 with a p-value of .001 for the conventional method. The corrected model accounts for 20.6% of the variance in performance scores, suggesting a moderate effect of the teaching methods on student performance. Since the p-values are both less than the conventional alpha level of .05, we reject the null hypothesis, concluding that there is a significant difference in the performance mean scores between the two groups. This implies that the simulation method significantly enhances student learning outcomes in Civic Education compared to the conventional method, highlighting the effectiveness of more interactive teaching strategies in fostering academic success.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the performance mean score of junior secondary school students taught Civic Education with the project-based learning method and those taught with the conventional method
ANCOVA on the mean rating of those taught with the project-based learning and the conventional method on their Civic Education in Kogi State

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: person

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	17477.982a	5	8738.991	259.463	.000
Intercept	20962.280	1	20962.280	622.377	.000
Convention	10659.228	1	10659.228	316.476	.000
Project-based learning	6981.622	1	6981.622	207.287	.000
Error	11485.227	175	33.681		
Total	1157590.00	180			
Corrected Total	28963.209	179			

a. R Squared = .024 (Adjusted R Squared = .006)

Table 6 displays the results of an ANCOVA analysis assessing the difference in performance mean scores of junior secondary school students taught Civic Education using project-based learning compared to those taught with the conventional method. The analysis reveals a significant effect of the teaching methods on student performance, with an F-value of 207.287 for project-based learning and p-values of .000 for both the project-based learning and conventional methods. The corrected model explains only 2.4% of the variance in performance scores, indicating a relatively small effect size. Given that the p-values are well below the .05 threshold, we reject the null hypothesis, concluding that there is a significant difference in the performance means scores between the two groups. This implies that project-based learning significantly enhances student performance in Civic Education compared to conventional teaching methods, suggesting the value of active, hands-on learning experiences in improving educational outcomes.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the joint interaction performance mean score of simulation and project-based learning method of junior secondary school students in Civic Education
ANCOVA on the mean rating of the joint effects of simulation method, project-based learning, on the junior secondary school students' performance in Civic Education in Kogi State

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: person

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	824562.011a	17	4121.005	104.676	.002
Intercept	74412.684	1	7412.684	188.286	.010
Convention	48754.523	1	48754.523	10.791	.000
PBL	42472.132	4	10618.033	2.350	.055
SM	411909.250	6	68651.642	15.195	.000
PBL * SM	7547.785	6	7647.785	181.717	.003
Error	113859.009	175	4518.052		
Total	659745.000	180			
Corrected Total	164027.500	179			

a. R Squared = .306 (Adjusted R Squared = .259)

Table 7 presents the results of an ANCOVA analysis evaluating the joint interaction effects of the simulation method and project-based learning (PBL) on the performance mean scores of junior secondary school students in Civic Education. The analysis indicates a significant overall effect of the teaching methods, with an F-value of 181.717 for the interaction term (PBL * SM) and a p-value of .003, suggesting that the combination of these methods significantly influences student performance. Additionally, the simulation method alone shows a significant effect with an F-value of 15.195 and a p-value of .000, while PBL approaches significance with a p-value of .055. The model explains 30.6% of the variance in performance scores, indicating a moderate effect size. Since the interaction between the two teaching methods is significant, we reject the null hypothesis, concluding that there is a notable difference in the joint performance mean scores. This implies that combining simulation and project-based learning methods can enhance student learning outcomes in Civic Education more effectively than either method alone, highlighting the potential benefits of integrating diverse instructional strategies in the classroom.

Summary of the Findings

1 Students taught with the simulation method had a significantly higher performance mean score compared to those taught with the conventional method, indicating that the simulation method is more effective.
2 Students taught using project-based learning achieved significantly higher mean scores than those taught with the conventional method, demonstrating the effectiveness of project-based learning in enhancing academic performance.
3 The joint interaction of the simulation and project-based learning methods resulted in significantly higher performance mean scores, suggesting that combining these methods enhances student learning outcomes.

Discussion of Findings

The results indicate that students taught using the simulation method achieved significantly higher mean scores compared to those instructed through the conventional method. This finding suggests that interactive and engaging teaching strategies are more effective in promoting better learning outcomes. This aligns with the research by Nwagbo and Obiekwe (2020), which demonstrated that both project-based and simulation methods significantly enhance students' performance in oral concepts. However, it is noteworthy that there was no significant difference in performance between male and female students taught using the project-based method. This highlights an important aspect of instructional equality, suggesting that project-based learning can effectively engage all students, regardless of gender. The implications of this finding point towards the need for educators to adopt more interactive methodologies to foster inclusive and effective learning environments. Overall, the evidence supports the adoption of simulation methods as a key strategy for improving student performance in Civic Education.

The findings reveal a significant difference in performance scores when comparing students taught through project-based learning to those instructed using the conventional method. Students who engaged in project-based learning exhibited markedly higher performance scores, underscoring the effectiveness of hands-on, collaborative learning experiences. This supports the work of Li (2023), who noted that while the integration of interactive technologies in classrooms can enhance engagement, it does not necessarily guarantee improved learning performance or teaching efficiency. This suggests that the effectiveness of teaching strategies may rely more on the nature of the activities than on the technologies employed. Furthermore, Okolo (2023) highlighted several benefits of the project-based method, indicating that it fosters positive study habits across all educational levels. Students engaged in project-based learning gain access to a vast array of information on diverse topics within various subjects, enhancing their overall knowledge base. This method also encourages the development of essential skills, such as effective note-taking, which is vital for academic success. Additionally, project-based learning facilitates the efficient coverage of the syllabus, allowing both teachers and students to navigate the curriculum more effectively. These findings suggest that educators should prioritize project-based learning as a fundamental teaching strategy, as it not only boosts student performance but also equips learners with critical skills for the future. Future studies could explore the long-term impacts of project-based learning on student engagement and the transferability of skills developed through this approach to other academic and real-world contexts. By investigating these aspects, researchers can provide deeper insights into the sustained effectiveness of project-based learning in diverse educational settings.

The results reveal a significant interaction effect between the simulation and project-based learning methods, indicating that the integration of these instructional strategies can enhance their individual benefits. This finding suggests that educators should consider developing hybrid teaching models that combine elements from both methods to further improve student performance. Such an approach could provide a more comprehensive learning experience, leveraging the strengths of interactive engagement and collaborative simulation. This aligns with the research by Ndioho (2022), which confirmed the effectiveness of both simulation and project-based methods on students' academic performance. Moreover, Nwagbo & Obiekwe (2020) similarly demonstrated that the combination of project-based and simulation methods significantly facilitates student performance in oral concepts. It is noteworthy that, despite the enhanced outcomes from these methods, no significant difference was found in performance levels between male and female students taught using the project-based approach. This finding underscores the potential of project-based learning to engage all students equally, suggesting that a blended approach can foster inclusivity while promoting higher academic performance. Future research could explore the specific components of these hybrid models that contribute most effectively to student success, as well as their applicability across different subjects and educational contexts.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, here are some recommendations for educators and policymakers:

1. Since the simulation method significantly enhances student performance in Civic Education, educators should prioritize the implementation of interactive teaching strategies in their curricula.
2. Given the effectiveness of project-based learning in improving student performance, educational institutions should integrate more project-based assignments into the Civic Education curriculum.
3. To maximize the benefits of both the simulation and project-based learning methods, educators should design hybrid instructional models that incorporate elements from both approaches.

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Conflict Among The People Of Ibaji In Kogi State, 1991 – 2020

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Abstract
This study examined the dynamics of conflict among the people of Ibaji in Kogi State, Nigeria. Using a qualitative approach, the research investigates the causes, consequences, and management strategies of the conflicts. The findings reveal that the conflicts are largely driven by issues of land ownership, chieftaincy disputes, and economic interests. The study recommends a multi-stakeholder approach to conflict management, involving traditional leaders and government agencies.
Keywords: Ubaji, conflict, Kogi State

Introduction

Ibaji is a local government area in the East Senatorial district of Kogi State, Nigeria. Despite its natural resources and strategic location, Ibaji has been plagued by recurring conflicts among its inhabitants. These conflicts have resulted in loss of lives, destruction of property, and displacement of people. The conflicts in Ibaji are complex and multifaceted, involving issues of land ownership, chieftaincy disputes, and economic interests. The area is rich in agricultural land, minerals, and timber, making it a hub of economic activity. However, the competition for these resources has created tensions among the people in the area. Conflict is and should be viewed as an important part of human existence, and it could occur between individuals, families, clans, communities, or intra or inter communities as long as there are incompatible interests.

This study, therefore aims to investigate the causes, consequences, and management strategies or mechanisms of the conflicts in Ibaji. By examining the complex dynamics of these conflicts, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors driving conflict in Nigeria's rural areas. Ultimately, the study aims to provide recommendations for sustainable conflict resolution and peace-building in Ibaji.

Uchuchu-Ayah Land Dispute

Uchuchu Community is an autonomous village in the Ibaji Area of Kogi State. History has it that the People of Uchuchu are descendants of the Aja-Akwu Royal Dynasty of the Igala Kingdom. The movement of the Uchuchu People to their present-day location took place around the second half of the 15th century during the reign of His Royal Majesty, Akwumabi,the then Attah Igala. This movement was based on the instruction of the Royal father, the Attah Igala to go and oversee his subjects in *umuemu*-Attah sphere of influence. After a peaceful co-existence with *Umuemu,* the Ibo-speaking people of the area revolted against the authority of Attah Igala, and this metamorphosed to guerrilla warfare as the dominant feature. At the time of migration of Uchuchu to their present location, no other Community except the Uchuchu Community was the first settlement, as shown in Onitsha-Idah Divisional Boundary.[1]

To Ekwoba, the two communities would not have engaged in a land dispute with each other, but the crisis started when farm land in *Obielu* was given to people from Odochala. From history, Odochala and Ayah Community were old time enemies over *Ukpo* Lake, and for that, the Ayah Community became aggrieved with the Imiah clan of Uchuchu who owned the portion of the land. This incident led to a conflict when Ayah People started attacking the people of Uchuchu in *Obielu* camp. For example, Mr Oyaka Anagor was badly attacked in *Obielu* camp; the incident led to a conflict between the people of Uchuchu and Ayah Community.[2] To Ukwedeh, he asserts that the causes of the crisis between the two Communities were a result of the misunderstanding over the ownership of the land in dispute. According to him, Ayah Community believed that they are the rightful or original owner of the land given to the Odochala people for farming.[3] Omachonu, in his contribution, opined that the portion of the land in conflict between the two Communities belongs to the people of Uchuchu, but agreed that the two Communities shared a common boundary with each other over the years. He is in agreement with the assertion of Ekwoba.[4]

The conflict had several impacts on both communities. Ekwoba asserts that the conflicts led to loss of lives and properties, economic deprivation / hunger in the land because many families could no longer access their farm land, many of their children could no longer go to school because parents could not afford the cost of education for their children. The crises created enmities amongst the communities that have been living together over the years.[5] Ukwedeh Roberts, view on the impacts of the conflict agreed with the position of Ekwoba, that lives were lost, the economic activities of the two communities were affected, which made things difficult for the people of the areas.[6] To Ekwoba, IDA played a significant role in handling the conflict. Both communities were asked to give up the dispute and were asked to maintain peace by holding on to their own land. And henceforth, any village found wanting of any violent action against each other shall pay a fine of: Ten thousand naira only (₦10,000), one traditional black cow, eight (8) kola nuts, and twenty litres of local dry gin (*ogogoro*).[7]
Finally, to Ogede Icheje, the dispute between the two communities was resolved after much effort from the neighbouring communities, from Anambra of West Local Government (*Olubanasa*) to intervene between the two Communities. In the settlement process, a delegation was led by Okolo Paul Igwe of Nzam, Chairman Anambra West Local Government Traditional Council, to meet with the two communities in dispute, asked the parties in conflict to give room for peace. This was concluded with oath- taking between the two communities as a traditional means of conflict management as imitated by Igwe Paul.[8] After all the efforts, communities were asked to maintain their own land and give room for peace to return to the areas.

Uchuchu and Omabo Land Dispute
According to Ekwoba, the land dispute between Uchuchu and Omabo Communities of Ibaji in Kogi State was a result of excess taxation on farm land and building plots by the people of Uchuchu, who are the original owners of the said area in dispute, on the people of Omabo. Onyeife of Omabo was entrusted the land of *Odo* Clans of Uchuchu as care taker because his mother was from *Odo* Clans of Uchuchu. He said the activities of Onyeife over the lands under his care were not initially known to the people of Uchuchu until some aggrieved persons from Omabo rose against Uchuchu Community, believing that the people of the Uchuchu were the ones who authorised Onyeife to imposed heavy land taxation. Aggrieved Omabo people came to attack the *Odo* people of Uchuchu while bailing their pond in their land. A day after the attack on the *Odo* People of Uchuchu, Omabo Community invited Uchuchu Community for a meeting to resolve the conflict. The meeting could not resolve the conflict as both parties engaged in violent clashes that lasted for three years, (1991-1993).[9] Philip Jacob asserts that the dispute was caused because both parties in dispute laid claim of ownership to the land, lakes, pond, and stream channels. To him, the crisis started gradually by throwing stones and sticks at each other while fishing in the lakes, which later resulted in the use of guns and other available weapons.[10] But from his views, he did not mention who started the throwing of stones and sticks, and did not mention who or the Community that started the shooting of guns.
In February 1921, the proceedings of the court case between Omabo and Ikah in the Aguleri court, the evidence of Uchuchu's ownership of land emerged. One Okechuku of Omabo Community testified in the open court that their present-day location in Northern Province was given to them by Uchuchu Community.[11] This is shown in the National Archives record.
The memo written by the then Assistant District Officer of Onitsha, J. W. Jewell on 20th May, 1927, clearly explains how the People of the Uchuchu community fought the People of Enugu Aguleri, who invaded Uchuchu Community land in Ajogbe and its environs in 1905 and were able to recover their land and ponds after the invasion.[12] Ibaji Development Association (IDA's) white paper on the land dispute between Uchuchu and Omabo in the early 90s was in favour of the Uchuchu Community as it was said in the paper that the land belongs to the Uchuchu Community and that the Omabo Community should continue to pay tributes to the Ogohi of Uchuchu, as they had been paying in the past by their ancestors. More importantly the white paper also confirmed (that since the land was not newly created, but was there and the two communities were living in harmony with each other and step back to their ancestral ways of managing the disputed land area without hitches,) the body ensure that all land area and fish ponds that were forcefully claimed by Omabo community should be returned to the original or rightful owners and maintained the modalities under which fishing is carried out in the various ponds in the past. The white paper stated that henceforth, any village found wanting of any violent action against each other shall pay a fine of ten thousand naira only (₦10,000), one traditional black cow.[13] The paper also cited the court case in the then Attah Igala's Palace in 1933, in which the Igala ruled that the land and ponds belong to the Uchuchu Community. This white paper was the report of a land dispute between Uchuchu and Omabo under the chairmanship of Omachonu S. O., the National Chairman of IDA at Inemeh.[14] The body has the representative of every village and their Traditional Rulers. From the National

Archive report, as considered by the District Officer of Onitsha and Assistant District Officer, it shows that from Omabo down to the present settlement of Echeno in Ibaji belongs to the People of Uchuchu Community.[15]
The impacts of the conflict on both Communities were quite negative. To Philip Jacob, the crisis created an untold hardship, hunger in the land because the people could no longer access their farmland due to fear of being killed. Many lost their lives and properties were destroyed, which affected the levels of development in the area.[16] Ekwoba Mathias also said that the crisis led to the loss of lives, human displacement, destruction of farmlands, and resources that could have been used for development. Many who were affected did not recover from the shock or psychological trauma from the conflict.[17] In any conflict situation, there are means of conflict management to put the conflict under control. Philip Jacob, says that many personalities from neighbouring communities intervened in a bid to resolved the crises but no reasonable result was achieved until Paul Okolo, Igwe of Nzam, chairman Anambra traditional Council and Emmanuel Akubeze from Anambra West Local Government engaged the two Communities in conflict for peace talk and at the end, oath were taken between the parties in conflict as imitated by Igwe Paul Okolo, the act led to ceased fire in the crises.[18] The reason for the oath is to put an end to the crisis and allow peaceful co-existence in the area.

Odeke-Agwohi Conflict 1995

To Monday, Odeke is an autonomous community in the Ibaji Local Government Area of Kogi State. It is among the largest communities of the above-named local government. The major occupations of this community are: fishing and farming. Odeke borders Enugu-Otu (Anambra State) to the East, Obale and Unwajala to the north-east, Ayeke and Enweli to the north, Ayah and Uchuchu to the west, and Anocha to the south. From history, the first settler of the place known as Odeke today is *Oyike,* who was known to be a dogged warrior; but despite being a warrior, he always welcomed those who visited his land in peace with good heart. The Odeke community is classified into thirteen (13) clans. These clans include: Omatoji, Omayangolo, Omaba, Omekeya, Omojabuwa, Omagacha, Omecho, Omanegedu, and Omochi (these are the king entitled clans). Others are: Agwohi, Ubiebo, Uru, and Iramura (the non-king entitled clans). Evidently, the king entitled clans (i.e, the descendants or sons) begins with the phonotactics '*Oma',* which means child. So, they are the nine (9) children of *Oyike,* the first settler of the present-day community called Odeke. These nine (9) clans are realistically referred to as the sons of the soil, the owners of the land.[19]
He further stated that because of his generosity, the first settler *Oyike,* gave out good portions of his land to those who came to live with him. History has it that he gave out his farmland and fishing ponds to people as he desired because he was always busy with his hunting and warring business, so he never bothered about farming or fishing. Ironically, those he gave out his land to become more popular in terms of land ownership, and this became a big issue between the sons of the first settler and the sons of those who came to settle in the community afterward. To the extent that *Oyike*'s descendants has to struggle to get farmlands and fishing ponds, to do their fishing. The sons of the later settlers started leasing out farmlands, and even fishing ponds, to the sons of the earlier settlers (*Oyike*) in expectation of tributes.[20]
Consequently, in the early 1960s when the oppression became unbearable, one of the great grandsons of Oyike called Mr Udogwu Ayegba from Omekeya, led a peaceful protest to stop the oppression of the descendants of Oyike. Although few descendants of Oyike were with him, he took the bull by the horns and the struggle to reclaim their father's land. He noted that the protest led by Mr Udogwu Ayegba to reclaim Oyike land was particularly against the Agwohi clan, one of the non-kings entitled clans in Odeke. This was because the Agwohi people later became so hostile to the descendants of Oyike, even encroaching into farm lands and fishing ponds not originally given to their father by Oyike. This resulted in legal dispute, instituted by Mr Udowgu Ayegba in 1978, against the Agwohi clan. And this marked the beginning of civil litigation between Odeke (the nine king entitled clans, *Amomajonu*) and the Agwohi clan. In 1979, a judgement was given in favour of the Odeke people against the Agwohi people by the State High Court, Idah. With the judgment, there was some fresh air in the entire community for some years. But some years after the death of Mr Udogwu Ayegba in November 1989, another level of crisis between Odeke and Agwohi began. Mr Udogwu's death was seen as an opportunity by the Agwohi people to begin another level of encroachment into the Odeke Community's land. This marked the beginning of court litigations.[21]
According to Omatule, between 1990 and 1995, several court cases between Odeke and Agwohi were raised and decided in the law Court, some in favor of Odeke and some in favour of Agwohi. The judiciary was alleged to have been compromised, but the Odeke Community stood its ground, and this time around, the entire nine (9) king entitled clans became united in fighting the common front. The then Onu of Odeke, His Royal Highness, Pius Anegbeke, was so committed to the plight of his people to ensure that no portion of Odeke land was encroached by the Agwohi people. As a result of the level of unity among the Odeke people, as initiated by His

Royal Highness, Pius Anegbeke, the Agwohi people became ever more threatened and became more aggressive at any little provocation by Oyike descendants of the community.[22]

Another informant simply known as Monday stated that the conflict came to a head in December 1995, during the festive period. A female cultural dance was to be showcased by Ubiebo Clan, one of the non-king entitled clans in the community, but the clan refused to inform *Onu* Odeke properly as the custom demands. This led to some fracas between Ubiebo people and *Onu* Odeke's cabinet, and the Odeke youths were angry and made a move to stop the cultural dance unless they do the needful. However, Ubiebo Clan went on to showcase the cultural dance without doing the needful and *Onu* Odeke saw it as an insult on his personality and that of the entire community. The youths were eventually ordered to stop the cultural dance round the community. In an attempt to stop the showcasing of the said cultural dance, crisis started.[23] He noted that Ubiebo and Agwohi clans share the same boundary, but the two as earlier mentioned, are non-king entitle clans. The Agwohi people made some moves to defend their neighbor, Ubiebo, but eventually found themselves at the centre stage. Odeke youth became more interested in seeing the Agwohi people, their real enemy, taking over the matter. The crisis escalated and there was pandemonium all over the community. And after several reinforcements by Odeke youths, they left the Ubiebo people and faced the Agwohi people squarely. In a couple of hours, the Agwohi people were all chased away to neighboring villages like Ihile and Anocha. This led to the burning down of their houses and other belongings. Interestingly, no one was injured or killed because the youths were instructed not to do so, but the destruction was extensive. They were not even allowed to run away with their belongings, though some of them, whose mothers were of Oyike origin, were allowed to do so. Some of them were even allowed to harbour in their mothers' clans within the community.[24]

According to Joseph, the Onu Agwohi, in his contribution, traced the cause of the crisis to the original owner of the portion of the land where the Odeke community settled, which was given to them by the Agwohi People. The place is called *Ugodene* Agwohi village, owned by the Agwohi people. To him, the name Odeke originated from the word *Eke,* the python snake that served as the security in the area (*Ugodene)* which, when the Odeke people came, the snake (*Eke*) was disturbing them, thereby telling Agwohi that the land given to them was full of python, meaning *Odo-Eke.* At this time, the People of Odeke were paying tribute to the Agwohi. He agreed that Odeke Community has their own land and fish ponds, but did not settle in their own land. After the Nigerian civil war, the people started fighting the Agwohi people. This action was led by Pius Anegbeke, the king of Odeke at the time. According to king Pius, the Agwohi are the minority and how could Odeke, the majority, be paying tribute to Agwohi? For them to achieve their aim, they formed an alliance with other three Clans who were not entitled to their traditional stool with a promise that, after taking over the land, they would be entitled to the traditional stool in Odeke. The Clans are *Omagacha, Omayangolo* and *Omochi*. [25]

He further opined that on 22nd December, 1995, when the conflict got worse when the Ubiebo Clan of Odeke wanted to showcase their cultural dance known as *Ayakaya* dance in Odeke, the Odeke people, who had been looking for a way of attacking Agwohi, said that the Ayakaya dance, the female dance group, would not be showcased because they did not inform the King of Odeke. For that, they felt insulted and directed the youth of Odeke to stop them, they started throw stones at them and setting their building on fire to make sure the Agwohi people vacated the area. The Agwohi people retaliated.[26] Joseph stated that the people of Odeke wanted the traditional head of Agwohi to be answerable to the traditional stool of Odeke.[27] These indecent led to the burning down of houses in Agwohi. The Agwohi people were all chased away to neighboring communities like Ihile and Anocha. No one was injured nor killed, but the destruction was extensive. To him, the then *Onu* of *Ihile* Mr. Udwe Egwuche, told the Onu of Odeke, that his father did not inform him that the Odeke people own the land under dispute, as the area belongs to Agwohi.[28]

Clement asserts that Odeke and Agwohi had lived together for over a century in peace and harmony, engaged each other in an inter – communal clash over the ownership and control of farm, residential lands and the lakes therein. The crisis only lasted for a few hours, and at the end, the Agwohi community was in ruins thereby took refuge in the neighbouring community of Ihile.[29] In another development, the crisis led to the removal of the then Onu Ibaji, Chief Ikani Ocheje as the Onu Ibaji by Atta of Igala, Alhaji Ali Obaje in 1995.

Consequently, in January 1996, the Kogi State Government under the then Military Sole Administration, Major Gen. Paul Omeruo, ordered the arrest of several personalities of Odeke (*Oyike*) origin. The arrest was made, and those arrested remained in detention for some months before the case was charged to court for determination. The court litigation lasted for some months before it was eventually ruled that those arrested could only be released on the condition that the Odeke people accepted rebuilding the houses destroyed and allowed the Agwohi people back to the community. In the long run, the community accepted the condition and those in detention were set free on bail. And gradually, the Odeke people both at home and diaspora rebuilt all the houses destroyed during the crisis. In 1997, the Agwohi people were moved back to the community. The day they

returned to the community, there was joy everywhere. There was an atmosphere of relief among the people of the community. [30]

To Clement, the Kogi State Government under Col. Paul Omeruo swung into action and ordered the Odeke Community to rebuild the houses that were burnt down in Agwohi Community, and they complied with the directives. This was later supervised by Col. Bzigu Afakarya, who took over from Col. Paul Omeruo, and Agwohi was returned back to their community.[31]The exercise restored peace in the area.

The Iyano Kingship Crisis, 1998

The position of *Onu* (*King*) of Iyano has been a subject of acrimony between Itale and Aluaja on one side and the Iru people on the other side, over their perceived ''right'' to the throne. Ojima Abel says the monopoly of traditional power by the Iru people of Iyano in a clearly loose confederation as the Iyano community, coupled with the fact that they are tenants on Itale land, which has been a source of bickering and agitations for reform.[32] He further opined that the crisis was bitterly fought in the appointment of Gago of Iyano, which was centred on the agitation for rotation of Gagoship among Itale, Iru and Aluaja. This conflict had its roots in the Iyano/ Aluaja land dispute of 1959-1976. Following the death of Gago Anedo in 1960, the struggle for his replacement became a subject of agitation for the rotation of the office. He stated that when the issue came to the attention of the then Igala Native Authority, an official was sent to Iyano in 1961 to conduct an election into the vacant position, which was considered political. In the said election, Okpakala Anedo from Itale defeated the candidate of the Iru people, late Umonu Ajodo. However, through influence, peddling and manipulation, the defeated candidate was smuggled in as the Gago of Iyano.[33] According to Egwuma Friday, the issue was resurrected in 1988 after the death of Ajodo as the Gago, whereby the Iru people wanted to hold on to the position, which was resisted by the Aluaja and the Itale people of Iyano. This problem led to the rejection of *Onu* Iyano, and it was resolved in 1994 with the agreement that the position of Gagoship should be on rotation among Aluaja, Itale and Iru.[34]

The report published in the Graphic Newspaper of Wednesday, July 10th, 1996, the misunderstanding surrounding the chieftaincy tussle was resolved by Late Alhaji (Dr.) Aliyu Obaje, the then Atta of Igala. His verdict was that the beading of the *Onu* (King) in Iyano Community should be rotated among the three villages. That after the tenure of the then *Onu* Iyano in Iru, Chief Ukwu Obaje, the stool should go to Aluaja, then Itale and back to Iru again in that order. This resolution was made in the presence of *Onu* Ibaji, Chief John Egwemi, Elder Samuel Ohiemi, John Ejima, Reuben Ajekwe , Joshua Ojokwu and Joseph Igaga.[35] Abel asserted that after the death of Chief Ukwu Obaje, the Iru people refused to follow the arrangement, thereby disobeying the Atta's ruling of 1996, presented Simon Egwuda to *Onu* Ibaji for beading as a Third Class Chief without the consent of Aluaja and Itale. The two villages protested against the decision in 2013, to the Late Attah of Igala Michael Ameh Idakwo (Oboni 11) also affirmed the earlier resolution of rotation of *Onu* Iyano on the basis that the three communities are autonomous. He opined that since the ascendancy of Chief Simon Egwuda, the peace of the community have not been the same, which he has attempted to disrupt the celebration of the festivals of the other two villages through the instrumentality of the police.[36] The change of title, Okpala to Onu, should not be problematic or deemed to a creation of the chiefdom.

The Anika-Inali Conflict, 1999

In the conflict between Anika and Inali, Theophilus –an informant – was of the view that it started from a disagreement between a wife and her sister in-law, over a domestic matter. This quarrel escalated as the children of both women joined in the fight. Eventually, the sister-in-law from Inali and her children were expelled and this led to a face-off between Anika and Inali people. Several people from Anika were attacked. At this point, representative of the King in Anocha then called for a resolution of the conflict. While the meeting was on-going, the people from Inali further attacked Anika people and one Lucky was beaten up by Inali. It was at this point Anika people attacked them back. This resulted to gun shooting and two persons were killed from Anika. The people who came to resolve the conflict, horridly left the place for safety to *Ane-idu*.[37] To Dominic Ameh, the crisis was resolved by *Onu* Uchuchu who moved to Anocha for a period of seven days, for peace talk. During this peace talk, it was ruled by *Onu* (King) that Inali Clan has defiled the land for killing and they were fined with one Cow, twenties tubers of yam, four kola nut, eight cantions of beers, ten litters of wine, one black goat to be used to cleansed the land for bloodshed and a female child each to be given to the families that lost their beloved once which is known as *Ochu* as the traditions demand to appeased the family for the lost. He further stated that the sacrifices were done after the presentation of those items and Anika people were made to return back to their ancestral home in Anocha before the return of *Onu* Uchuchu, John Nwakonuche Uchola.[38] This measure and condition were accepted as natural phenomena in conflict management among Ibaji people of Kogi State.

The Aluaja and Abujaga Conflict, 2013

According to Eji Enemah, the crisis of this land and fish pond was bitterly fought with a litany of other litigations. The suit commenced in Ata Igala,s Court in 1962, after futile attempts by Ibaji Elders to settle the dispute failed. The crisis ended at the Supreme Court with no victor, no vanquished.[39] He further stated that even after the Supreme Court Judgement of 1976, there were still hostilities between the two communities, which continued with a series of Court cases until 1982 when the two parties reached some form of agreement. In the agreement reached, it was agreed that the fish pond would be earmarked for joint use by the Aluaja of Iyano and Abujaga communities.[40] According *Onu* of Aluaja, His Royal Highness, Benjamin Akoji, reported the controversies over fishing lake, land, and chieftaincy matters as responsible for the series of attacks on Aluaja since 2013, leading to its eventual destruction in 2015. The agreement reached on the matter, as reported, was that the three major fish ponds in *Ohimili, Itaminyo* and *Ofe* should be jointly used by Aluaja and Echule Abujaga villages. But there was a caveat attached to the usage to the effect that none of the ponds should be sold, and usage by a third part was prohibited. In spite of this, he noted that the fish ponds were sold by Iru, Itale and Echule Abujaga in contravention of the Court judgement of 1982/83. Consequent upon that, the matter was reported to the Area Commander in Idah and the kings of the two villages of Iru and Echule Abujaga was prosecuted at the Magistrate Court in Idah.[41] He further stated that on 23rd December, 2013, the people of Echule Abujaga, led by Clement Omachonu, entered Aluaja through Iru and started shooting at the villagers. Scores of people were injured because it was a surprise attack, and it was reported to the Divisional Police Officer of Ibaji, but no action was taken. On the 17th of April, 2014, through the combined efforts of Iru, Itale and Echule Abuajaga came to attack Aluaja village with sophisticated weapons leading to the killing of one Ameh Emmanuel. This again was reported to the DPO, and his men came to Aluaja and took the corpse to the General Hospital mortuary in Idah.[42] From the report, the conflict reached its peaked on May 24th, 2015, with the attack on Aluaja by Itale, Iru and Abujaga, resulting in the destruction of over 147,000 houses.[43] However, when contacted, some indigenes of the communities alleged to have waged the inter- communal war on Aluaja, dismissed the claims of the displaced community. According to Alex Attah of the Itale community of Iyano, it was not true that other communities conspired against Aluaja, noting that they have all lived together peacefully for over 300 years. He said his concerned was that they used the word conspired. These communities have lived together for over 300 years as brothers. The matter was taken to court, and up till the time of writing this research, the case on the ownership of the land and fish ponds is still in court.[44]

According to Clement Ajodo, the crisis was resolved when the then Administrator of Ibaji Local Government Council, Williams Iko-Ojo Obiora of Ayah, obtained the permission of the executive Governor of Kogi State, Alh. Yahaya Bello, to mobilise some ''Alubi Ayah Youths'' and peacefully returned the people of Aluaja to their Ancestral home on the 21st December, 2018, after they fled from their Ancestral home. He opined that this day would forever remain indelible in the minds of the Aluaja people.[45]

The Itale and Ishi Conflict, 2020

According to Sule Onyido, there has been a land dispute between the Itale and Ishi people in recent times. The disputes over some portion of Itale land in the south and southeast end, where Itale shared a boundary with Akwuro and Ishi and was bounded by Iru in the north. The features within the boundary are quite clear, displaying natural lakes like *Alu-OmiObia* ending at a place called A*gba*. Historically, *Agba* serves as a boundary between *Itale* and *Aboriginal-Oronu*, who left the place due to frequent and sudden death of their people. Meaning that where Ishi is holding as their land today originally belonged to the *Oronu* people.[46] However, this claim did not mention the location of Ishi before *Oronu* departed from the area as a result of the sudden death among their people. This boundary dispute, according to him, on several occasions neighbouring communities like Ikaka and Akwuro have intervened, and on such occasions, Itale came out victorious, meaning that Ishi was guilty of trespass. Despite these efforts by the neighbouring communities in ensuring peaceful co-existence, Ishi kept furthering their act of trespass on Itale land.[47] Emma Ojima asserts that, as of 2020, this case was before the Ibaji Local Government Area Peace and Security Committee. The case started when some people from Ishi went into Itale land, fell some economic trees without the permission of the Itale people as the land owner. The case was first reported to the police at Onyedega, but the traditional rulers of Akwuro and Ikaka intervened and requested the police to hand over the case to them for settlement. The people of Itale won the case. He further said that the claim of the *Agbodi* farm settlement by Ishi as part of their land was arising from the fact that some of the settlers in this farm settlement are politically answerable to the Ishi people. For that, recently, Ishi allocated a place within that settlement to somebody to erect a building.[48]

According to Attah Alex, as reported by News Nigeria, the remote cause of the crisis was still the Iyano conflict, alleging that some people were planning to carry out a vendetta on his people. The then SSA on security to the

governor in the Ibaji Local Government is an ally of a monarch who had consistently threatened the peace of his people.[49] In a swift reaction, Iko-Ojo Williams explained to News Nigeria that as the Chief Security Officer of the Local Government, protection of the lives and properties of the Ibaji people remains his top priority. While narrating the incident noted that there have been problems between Itale and Ishi communities over fish pond. To him, while they were trying to settle a matter in the community, they got a distress call that some persons from Itale and Ishi were fighting in the bush with dangerous weapons, hence, he immediately mobilised men of the Nigerian Navy in order to put an end it. He further explained that as SSA Security, despite the effort by the security agency to broker peace among the warring parties, some youths who were fully armed with weapons and charms on their neck and waist started shooting at the naval officers which led to gun duel between the suspected individuals and the naval officers in which one of them was shot, two arrested and others ran way. They took the injured one with bullet wounds to the hospital, but he gave up the ghost when the medical personnel were attending to him.[50] It was not clear whether those arrested were from Itale or Ishi, and the one who was killed was from Itale or Ishi.

The Ikah-Iregwu Conflict, 2020

Speaking on the crisis between Ikah- Iregwu, according to Mathias Anayor, the case erupted from a small portion of cassava farm land cultivated by Unokoba Onyechimogor at *Ere-edidi* owned by Omatawa of Uchuchu. That land brought issues between him and Udonwu Otola of Iregwu. This led to a court case at Echeno, between Omatawa and Iregwu, in the community and at the Court, the Ikah people testified against Iregwu in favour of Omatawa. To him, he said, the fact that Ikah testified in favor of Omatawa in court, Iregwu turned against Ikah, and they became enemies. Iregwu attempted to take over *Okwumu* Lake, which originally belongs to the Ikah people. When the Ikah people went to fish in the *Okwumu* Lake, Iregwu ordered Ikah to stop bailing the lake or pond. This gave rise to another conflict that eventually resulted in violent clashes between the Ikah and Iregwu people.[51] This made the Iregwu people relocate from their domain.

Clement opined that the two Communities, Ikah and Iregwu, which had lived together for many decades, locked horns in a fierce inter-communal battle. A couple of hours later, the Iregwu community became a ghost of itself, whereby the people had deserted their ancestral homes and then took refuge in the neighbouring friendly communities as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).[52] But, in his presentation, he did not mention the reason for the Communal battle as reported in his work.

To Paul Inocha, the cause of the conflict was the dispute over the *Okwumu* pond. The Okwumu pond has been there over the ages, and Ikah, the original owner of *Okwumu,* has been the one using the pond. He said that on the 24th April, 2016, when the Ikah people went to the fish pond*,* they were attacked by the people of Iregwu Community, who sent a message to *Onu* Ikah, asking him to tell his subjects to surrender the *Okwumu* pond. In response to the message to *Onu* Ikah, *Onu* Ikah orders his people (Ikah) to come back home because there was a new development from Iregwu. It was on their way back home that the Iregwu people started pelting the Ikah people with stones. The two communities that had lived together without demarcation started setting buildings ablaze and attacking many people who were on their way home.[53] To him, the actions of the Iregwu people were seen as externally motivated against the Ikah community. In any conflict situation, there is always third parties' intervention, but in the case of Ikah, what happened was the opposite: the Ibaji Development Association (IDA) and *Onu* Ibaji barred Ikah from participating in any activities in Ibaji. On this note, the people of Ikah challenged the action of IDA and the *Onu* Ibaji on their pronouncement on Ikah. The case was decided and ruled in favour of Ikah from the High Court, Idah, in 2017, that the IDA was wrong in their action.[54] Paul asserts that from both sides, Ikah and Iregwu, lives were lost, properties destroyed, and the people now living in fear. Despite all these, many groups tried to mediate for peace to return to the land.[55] Although it is important to note that not all crises and conflicts were managed through traditional mechanisms.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study examined some conflicts among the Ibaji people of Kogi State, between 1992 and 2020. Conflict is an integral aspect of every society and thus did not elude Ibaji. Some of the significant conflicts identified and analysed in this research were not left unaddressed, as they were therefore managed and resolved using the instrumentality of Ibaji, traditional conflict management and resolution mechanisms. Every socio- political organisation of Ibaji from the council of elders to age grade plays vital roles in the management and conflict resolution. These conflicts were managed and resolved successfully to the point that there was no room for recurrence of any kind, once resolved.

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Hausa–Fulani Migrants' Socio – Political, Economic Structures, Settlement Patterns and Leadership Model in Owerri, Imo State: A Study In Inter-Group Relations and Peaceful Co-Habitation, 1901-2013.

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Abstract
One question that has kept many inquiry minds in clear suspense has been one which seeks to understand the leadership, economic, political and social structures of the Hausa-Fulani settlements in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria, between 1901 and 2013. This yet to be fully answered question, leads up to another, which is the settlement patterns of these immigrants in Owerri, Imo State. This, again provokes yet another question, which seeks to understand the roles of the Sarkin (king) of the Hausa-Fulani settlements and his functionaries in the running of the day-to-day administration of the various settlements. This inquiry is intended to provoke an understanding of the factors behind the long term peace and solidarity which the Hausa-Fulani communities in Owerri metropolis and its environs enjoyed within the period under study. These questions when satisfactorily answered, hopes to provide essential information to policy makers in Imo State and relevant team of economic planners, social workers and government functionaries, which are relevant for proper and purposeful state planning, security initiatives and academic data necessary for students' intellectual pursuit, engagements, and for the general public, who may be interested in this branch of study. The paper, however, fills the gaps in available literature on inter-groups studies that have been largely silent on Hausa-Fulani in Owerri, Imo State. The significance of the study is anchored on the possible intellectual awareness and enhanced policy initiatives this research report will bring about. To achieve the ideal of this scholarly endeavour, the researchers adopted historical and analytical research methods, while anchoring majorly on multiple oral interviews in its data collection.
Keywords: Economic, Socio-Political, Structure, Settlement, Pattern, Hausa-Fulani.

Introductions

The entire South-east of Nigeria and, indeed, Owerri; the Imo State capital, have become, since the end of the Nigeria Biafra Civil war, and especially since the creation of Imo State in 1976, a melting pot, attracting as it were, more than the pre-civil war era, chains of immigrant elements from far and near. These immigrant elements included Europeans and Ghanaians who planned and implemented the Owerri Capital Territory Development Master Plan. Other early immigrants were the Yoruba, ijow, Ibibio, efik, etc. the roles they played in the development of modern Owerri are evidential and historically noted.

However, among these immigrant persons and groups as recorded by local history, the Hausa-Fulani immigrants have become, beginning from the end of the Nigeria civil war, an important component of the state's as their increased population and strategic economic and political activities, as well as their permanent settlement patterns, have almost assumed a status as the six quarter fully recognized in Oweri, sharing almost equal economic, social and political rights with indigenous groups.

Indeed, the political, economic and social status which Hausa-Fulani settlements have assumed in Owerri is not unconnected to the leadership models which the Sarkin presents, hence the concession of certain rights by the state Government in recognition of their immense contributions to the overall development of Owerri and Imo State in general. Concerned therefore about the growing numbers of the Hausa-Fulani elements in Owerri, their orderly conducts, leadership styles and interconnectivity between and among their various settlements in, and around Owerri, be it those Hausa-Fulani immigrants who live in Obinze, Ihiagwa, Ohi, Orji, Nekede, Irete Amakohia, Ndegwu or Orogwe. Above all, the president's inquiry is intended to X-ray and bring to fore, the knowledge of the Hausa-Fulani socio-economic, political structure, leadership models and settlement patterns within, and around Owerri, the capital territory of Imo State, between 1901 and 2013, in the belief that this knowledge when proper understood, will enhance healthy relationship between the Hausa-Fulani elements and their host communities on one hand, and strengthen the bonds of engagement between the immigrants and government of the state on the other hand.

Theoretical Framework:
The Migrant Settlement Theory,[2] which was developed by Peter Stalker, better explains the choice of Owerri and its surroundings as the best destination or settlement for the Hausa-Fulani immigrants within the period this study covers.
According to theory, migrants all over the world have anywhere on the entire earth to choose as preferred settlements. However, any of such choices must be guided by historical ties and antecedents such as network of settlements or colonies created by earlier migrants, including well established routes created by earlier migrants which would serve as links to the preferred settlements.[2]
For the Hausa-Fulani Migrants who came to Owerri and its environs between 1901 and 2013, oral history shows that nine years before 1901, the first Hausa-Fulani Migrants who included; Mallam Suleman, Yahaya, Maguzawa herbalist, a Fulani Cattle herder, Yahaya's hunter friend named Malam Dogo Makama, and Gaba Gujuku were cited in Imo area.[3] These first Hausa-Fulani Migrants were known to have established a settlement in Owerri at a place known today as Ama-Hausa, though formerly known in traditional Owerri language as Okeohia, meaning, thick forest.[4] These earlier settlers must have served as attraction to late Migrants who made Owerri their choice of destination in the later years, and, perhaps, were said to have followed the same routes as did the earlier Migrants. It is for the reason of the earlier routes and settlements created by first wave of Migrants which influenced the choice of same routes and settlements by the later years' Hausa-Fulani Migrants that informed the adoption of the theory for this study.

Hausa Migrants' Socio-political, Economic Structure and Settlement Pattern in Owerri and the Functions of the Sarkin Hausawa.
Political Structure: Like many areas in Nigeria where Hausa Migrants' settlements existed, the political structure of their settlement in Owerri, for instance, was closely interconnected with the development and organizational requirements of long-distance trade in which they were engaged.[5] Their political structure was designed to protect and promote their economic interest and, to a reasonable degree, protect their social lifestyle. In like manner, the application of their political culture and structure in Owerri were intended to protect their properties and exploit their host communities.
Structurally, beginning from the closing years of the 18th Century, when the first group of Hausa-Fulani Migrants came to Owerri from Kano, and the subsequent establishment of their political structure in *Ama-Hausa* area of Owerri, which was first headed by Malam Yahaya Suleman Isa,[6] the structure had since then consolidated its presence in the area. According to Saidu Suleman, beginning from 1901 when the official presence of British Colonialists became real in Owerri and the subsequent recognition of Hausa-Fulani political structure in the area by the Colonial Authorities, the entire settlement of Hausa-Fulani in Owerri had been ruled by four successive Sarki, made up of Malam Isa Yahaya- the first Sarkin Hausawa in Owerri. He was followed by Abdullahi Sule. The third was Malam Makama Sule. The fourth being Alhaji Saidu Baba Suleman who was still on the throne at the time this report was being compiled.[7]
In the same vein, the creation of Imo State in 1976 and the subsequent review of local government structures in Nigeria in 1996 consequently resulted in the constitution of Owerri into a separate council, and was named Owerri Municipal. This political restructuring also led to the creation of Asuzu Ward, which included *Ama-Hausa*, which gave rise to further recognition of the Hausa-Fulani political structure in the area, hence the further entrenchment of Hausa-Fulani political structure in Owerri.[8] Importantly, the increased number of Hausa-Fulani population and their unavoidable expansion to other parts of the State's capital gave rise to the establishment of Hausa-Fulani Youth Wing, whose duty was to aid the Sarkin and his officials to 'catch up' with the socio-economic and political functions required of them by the Hausa-Fulani settlers in Owerri.
As at the time of this field research, it was noted that the youth- wing of Hausa-Fulani political structure in Owerri was headed by Iliasu Kadaki. Similarly, the secretariat of their political structure was headed by a Secretary whose duties were concerned with writing and documentation of administrative activities. This was essential for the day to day functioning of the entire political structure. In addition to the above information is, according to Suleman, the inter-political and religious connect between the Hausa-Fulani leadership at *Ama Hausa* and those Hausa-Fulani Migrants who lived in such areas as Obinze, Ihiagwa, Orji, Irete, Orogwe, Emekuku, Naze, Ohii, Egbu, Avu, Awaka, Emii,Umuorii,Ndegwu and Nekede.[9]
The roles played by the Sarkin-Hausawa for the effective functioning of the entire political structure and the continuity of the Hausa-Fulani political structure in Owerri were many and diverse. For instance, the Sarki mediated between Hausa-Fulani Migrants and their hosts whenever there was conflict between the two ethnic groups. Some times when cases of dispute were high and beyond the Sarki's ability to resolve, he liaised with

the traditional ruler of Owerri (Eze Njemanze) to resolve such cases. He also ensured that there was peace among the Hausa-Fulani Migrants who lived in Owerri.[10]

Another function performed by the Sarki was that he and his officials served as bridge between Hausa-Fulani Migrants who lived in Owerri and the Imo State Government, including the Local Councils where Hausa-Fulani people lived within Owerri.[11] This function was invoked when there was misunderstanding between the Migrants and the hosts. Besides the issue of conflicts, the Sarki and his officials, in consultation with the Chief Imam of the Hausa-Fulani settlement in Owerri, worked in tandem with Imo State Government in arranging for, and sponsoring Muslims who were qualified for pilgrimage to Mecca.

More so, given the fact that the Sarki's maternal home was Awaka in Owerri-North, he used this biological connection to forge peaceful relationship between the Migrants and Owerri people. Again, as the holder of the prestigious Oha-Owerri Title, he was more like a bridge between Hausa-Fulani Migrants and Owerri people, especially in the area of social functions and ceremonies, such as the *Oru-Owerr*i, the *Awaka Festiva,* marriage and naming ceremonies. Expectedly,

> Eze Owerri usually informed the Sarkin of Hausa-Fulani communities in time to observe and share with Owerri people the rites of Oru-Owerri Annual Festivals. The Hausa-Fulani Migrants only identified with the ceremony at Ugwu-Ekwema as mere invitees, but have never participated in the celebration as members of Owerri, even though they were required to do so. They do partake in eating and drinking with Owerrri people during the ceremony, but do not take part in other rituals.[12]

The reason for this exclusivism was not unconnected to their belief system which avoided certain interferences which might adulterate their Islamic practices. In addition, the Sarki played the essential role of welcoming and seeing to the settlement of new Hausa-Fulani immigrants to *Ama-Hausa*. Given the fact that he (Sarki) was by birth a descendant from the line of the Hausa Migrants who first settled at *Okeohia* (Ama-Hausa) and built the first houses in the area, by tradition of inheritance, he owned most of the houses in *Ama-Hausa*, and as such, took decisions on who occupied any of the houses.

It is equally essential to mention that with the expansion of businesses and other opportunities in Owerri and the increased participation of the Migrants in these businesses, especially trading, it became a problem giving out goods on trust to unknown and new immigrants in the quarters. To solve this obvious problem, Suleman explained that the Sarkin often recommended and guaranteed any member of the settlement who wanted goods given to him on credit. The Sarki's assurance of the character and trust worthiness of the credit fertility applicant automatically eased the transaction.[13]

More so, the Sarki played key role in ensuring that the increased Hausa-Fulani population was controlled by assisting in relocating their population to new areas within and around Owerri. The result of this could be seen in the expansion of Hausa-Fulani population to areas like Obinze, Orji, Nekede, Ihiagwa and Government House areas. The importance of this function was underscored by the fact that the success of Hausa-Fulani trade and continuous exploitation of the resources of host communities depended largely on the expansion and creation of network of trade and new settlements within and around Owerri.

It should be pointed out, however, that the entire role of the Sarki and his line of officials, as well as the reasons for the creation and consolidation of Hausa-Fulani political structure in Owerri, was, above all, to ensure the protection of the Migrants' economic interest in Owerri, and by extension, to secure the security of their lives and properties, as well as the assurance of safe heaven for Islamic Religious practice. Any reason outside of these was both secondary and inconsequential, hence did not elicit much concern for them.[14]

The Social and Economic Structures: what is more, the socio-economic structure of Hausa-Fulani Migrants in Owerri was a complex one. As a structure and a system that was premised on continuity, it depended, re-enforced and anchored on birth, wealth creation, occupation and patron- client relationship. In essence, their occupational specialties were ranked and were hereditary in nature, as it was often hoped that the first son of a Hausa man in the quarters would, at the death, or old age of his father, took over the father's occupation and kept the line of business or profession alive for the family.

As a means of achieving socio-economic heights, the Migrants' socio-economic tradition of patron-client relationship was fully entrenched in Owerri. For instance, Illiasu observed that ascension to the traditional political throne of Hausa-Fulani in Owerri was based on hereditary and right of seniority of children of the Sarkin. In addition, the social status of any member of the Hausa families in Owerri was directly or indirectly dependent on the economic, social and political status of the person's family.[15]

Within the quarters, there were a lot of social rules and order which were aimed at keeping stability in the settlement. For instance, a new Hausa-Fulani immigrant to the quarters did not automatically become a permanent member of the quarters in which he found himself. There were, according to oral source, laid down procedures on how to become a permanent member of the quarters. Such Immigrant was made to gradually

assimilate the norms and ways of life in the quarters which will, over time, qualify him to become part of the quarters' social system.[16] On arrival to the quarters, the immigrant was first considered a stranger. It was only when the older members of the quarters, including the Sarki (in the case of Ama-Hausa settlement) deemed him fit, haven confirmed his moral life, trust worthiness and, above all, his ability to remain submissive to the social rules and norms governing the quarters, that he would be graduated to the status of a permanent dweller in the quarter.[17]

Social roles and categorization within the quarters included rights in housing, occupational stability, residence of wife and children within the quarters, primary relations within the settlements, relations with the chief (Sarki) as well as rights to housing and permanent accommodation within the quarters. These were major factors to be considered before according the immigrants the needed political, economic and social rights; and without which, such a person was still considered non full actor in the everyday life in the quarters.

The type of occupation Hausa-Fulani Migrants in the quarters engaged in enabled them to have access to housing facilities, and thus, enabled them to make more commitments to the ideals and values of the settlements. For instance, a Tailor, Babar, provision seller, etc, by the nature of their business needed permanent accommodation, and as such, they were expected to contribute to the sustenance of the settlement in which they did business. This was unlike a lorry driver or transporter whose business was temporary because such category of Migrants only came, delivered goods, then left. His stay in the quarters did not last more than one week or two.

These types of Migrants did not have much stake in the social life of the quarters, and thus, did not need to live permanently in the area. They were socially considered more as strangers than dwellers; and, as such, did not need permanent housing accommodation. Besides the type of occupation which the migrants engaged in as factors for consideration for rights of permanent residency in the quarters, such Migrants' application for accommodation was favourably considered if they were married. The reasoning behind this was that a married man with his family arguably had, by such status, shown readiness to live permanently in the quarters.

This was even taken more seriously if the prospective dweller was married to Owerri woman. Malam Yahaya's marriage with a daughter of Njoku Nwanshi of *Akabo,* the marriage between Malam Dogo Makama with Awaka woman which led, not only to their acceptance as permanent dwellers in *Okohia* (Ama-Hausa), but also inspired them to contribute to the development of Owerri, hence the building of the only Hausa owned houses in Ama-Hausa and the first mosque which was built by the early Hausa-Fulani immigrants to the area were pointers to the fact that the above listed conditions were actually efficacious in according any Hausa-Fulani Migrant a residential status within the Hausa quarters in Owerri.[18]

However, and regrettably too, in the recent past, this type of marriage relationship had ceased to exist between Owerri people and their Hausa-Fulani immigrants. The reasons for this were not farfetched. In the first place, it has to be noted that the reasons for, and the consequences of the Nigeria/Biafra War, to a large extent, negatively affected the formerly existed cordial relationships between the Migrants and their hosts to the extent that, in the recent times, the feelings of mutual mistrust and lack of confidence was heightened between the two groups, hence the introduction of friction in their relationships.

The feeling of fear, hatred and mistrust was even exhibited more by the Migrants, not only in their relationships with their host in Owerri, but also in their dealings with Igbo Migrants who lived in Northern Nigeria. This was even more worrisome in the face of the fact that even when Owerri people, in their spirit of hospitality and acceptance, attempted to keep negative passion behind each time they related with Hausa-Fulani Migrants, yet, they (Hausa-Fulani Migrants) did not show sincere intention to embrace Owerri people in mutual co-existence devoid of rancor and acrimony. Njemanze Tom commenting on this, had this to say,

> The peace and cordial relationships which Hausa-Fulani Migrants enjoyed in their relationships with Owerri people was because of the nature and tradition of Owerri people which do not seek vengeance. Because Owerri people were more educated and more exposed; they considered peace and good neighbourliness priceless commodities worthy of preservation and without which the cordiality which existed between them would not have been possible. Otherwise the attitude of Hausa- Fulani Migrants in Owerri was nothing to write home about; and as such was capable of fanning the embers of anger and crisis. Sadly too, Hausa-Fulani in Northern Nigeria could not relate with Owerri people in their domain the same way Owerri people related with them in Owerri, irrespective of the anger caused by the Nigeria/Biafra War[19].

Similarly, the recent case of non marriage relationship between the two groups also stem from divergent religious believes. For instance, the disagreement on the issue of circumcision-a practice that is common among Christians, but vehemently opposed by Islam, was not an encouraging factor in the relationship between Hausa-Fulani Migrants and Owerri people. Apart from marriage as one of the conditions for permanent residency in *Ama-Hausa*, there must, in addition, be an evidence of commitment in the relationship between the Migrant and

the Chief of *Ama-Hausa* (Sarki). This mutuality was, in turn, reciprocated by the Chief or Sarki who, for instance, crowned or Turbaned any deserving Hausa-Fulani Migrant as a recognition of his loyalty and contributions for the wellbeing of Hausa Migrants in Owerri.

More so, within the Migrants communities in Owerri, there were three levels of the Migrants. These included the primary Migrants or the settler group. They were so called because they were the first groups of the Migrants who first settled at the place that later became known as *Ama-Hausa*. Added to this group were their children who lived in *Ama-Hausa*. Baba Suleman –the-Sarkin Hausa in Imo State was a typical example of the descendants of the first wave of Hausa-Fulani Migrants who settled in Owerri. Unfortunately, according to oral sources, many in this group, such as Malam Dogo, Malam Yahaya, etc, have all died and left behind their offsprings.[20]

Besides the above named class of Hausa migrants who belonged to the group of primary migrants or settlers, a wide range of the migrants who, by the nature of their business activities and social involvements, lived permanently in the quarters, could also be classified as settlers. This group was part of the post Civil War Migrants to the area, and were mostly those found in such businesses as sales of cattle, currency exchange, religious activities, tailoring, provision, etc. By the nature of their business and their contact with the environment, they were very much knowledgeable in the ways of life of Owerri people. This also included knowledge of the norms and value system of the quarters in which they lived.

The second group of the Migrants found in the Hausa-Fulani quarters in Owerri was the “Secondary Migrants”. They were so called because they belonged to the group of Migrants who came to Owerri from various parts of Northern Nigeria, especially beginning from the end of the Nigeria/Biafra War, in 1970. They were mostly men, and largely unmarried, or those who left their wives and children in their source areas. For this category of Migrants, the push factor in their migration was mostly economic, while the pull factor was the search for a better economic environment.

These were mainly fortune seekers who depended so much on the primary Migrants or "Settlers” in the quarters for knowledge of the social and economic environment in both the Hausa quarters and in Owerri generally. Generally, they were "new comers", and in many cases, some of them might not have the capital to start up their own business. This is where the recommendation of the Sarki was invoked and applied; that is, if the Migrant was well known to the Sarki. They also depended on the “settlers” for knowledge of business opportunities in Owerri. For them, the decision to settle or travel out of Owerri back to their sources or any other part of Nigeria was always an unsettled issue. If they decided to settle, their status changed to that of a settler. If, on the other hand, they decided to return to their source or leave for another parts of Nigeria, they became erased from the social life of the quarters.

In the same vein, the third category or group of the Migrants in Owerri were called "the strangers". They were so called because this group of Migrants comprised of Hausa-Fulani elements who came to Owerri to do business. They did not have any intention to stay much longer in the quarters. Still among this group were those who came to visit their relatives and friends who resided in the quarters. These Migrants were not committed to the sustenance and development of the quarters.

Another group of Hausa Migrants who occupied part of the Hausa-Fulani social structure in Owerri were the women and the religious leaders. According to Illiasu Kadaki, the social role of the women in the quarters was not so pronounced due to the inhibitions of Islamic religion. Their role as cooks for the men who lived in the quarters was well known. The Imams, on the other hand, played essential religious roles for both the social, economic and spiritual wellbeing of Hausa-Fulani Migrants who lived in the area. As part of the social structure, the Chief Imam and Malams in the quarters jointly carried out religious functions in the quarter

Conclusions

The economic, social, political and leadership structures as well as the settlement patterns of the Hausa-Fulani Migrants in Owerri, Imo state, beginning from 1901 to 2013, have lasted for such a lengthy period of time that historical investigation, recommended, hence this research. Interestingly, the present investigation among other things, observed that the economic structure of the Hausa-Fulani in Owerri followed what was obtained in Northern Nigeria and in many traditional African societies wherein, through the traditional relay of skill and trade, many economic activities and skills were transferred from father to son through the process of apprenticeship. All new members of the settlements conformed to the rules and regulations upon which the economic and social structures of the quarters were built. In most instances, for new Migrants to gain permanent residency in any of the settlements, certain conditions were needed to be fulfilled by the immigrants in order to see the approval of the Sarki of the quarters.

There could be seasonal migrants who also needed the approval of the older members of the settlement for them to spend some time in the quarters and, consequently, have their goods sold without the fear of being scammed. Similarly seasonal Hausa-Fulani labour Migrants in the quarters needed approval by the older members of the settlements for them to secure whatever mania jobs they sought. Thus, the different gradations in the Hausa-Fulani Migrants, following time of migration and purpose of migration have become part of the settlement's social life.

In all instances, the economic, social and political activities in the quarters revolved around Islamic religious principles and practices. This, in turn, define their identity as a people from those of their host communities. In addition to the roles of the sarkin Hausawa, the elder and religious leaders who play important spiritual and advisory roles, the leadership of the youth wing of the administrative structure, helped in maintaining security and safety of the quarters.

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The Penetration of Salafi Ideology In Sub-Saharan Africa: Historical Trajectories; Local Adaptations And Raptures

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Abstract
The diffusion of Salafi ideology across Sub-Saharan Africa represents one of the most significant transformations in contemporary Islamic thought and practice. Rooted in the literalist interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith, inspired by early reformers like Ibn Taymiyyah and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Salafism calls for a return to the perceived purity of the early Muslim community, al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ. This study explores the historical trajectories, philosophical underpinnings, and socio-political contexts that have shaped the emergence and evolution of Salafism in Sub-Saharan Africa. Using historical analysis and comparative case studies from Nigeria and Sudan to Tanzania and Mali, the study examines how Salafi ideology interacted with pre-existing Islamic traditions, especially Sufi brotherhoods that had long dominated religious and political life. The research underlines the dual and often contradictory nature of Salafism's impact: while moderate Salafist movements were committed to peaceful reform through education, preaching, and moral renewal, other extremist factions formed an unlikely alliance between doctrinal purity and political discontent, nurturing nascent jihadist groups like Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and militant organizations in the Sahel. The paper argues that the expansion of Salafism was neither uniform nor monolithic but rather reflected diverse local adaptations shaped by complex colonial legacies, state-religion relations, and transnational influences from the Middle East. Ultimately, the study places Salafism within the broader dynamics of Islamic reform, fundamentalism, and state formation in Africa. It concludes that any understanding of the complex interplay between global Salafi flows and African religious traditions holds the key to interpreting contemporary patterns of Islamic identity, authority, and radicalization in the region.
Keywords: Salafism**,** Sub-Saharan Africa**,** Islamic Reform Movements**,** Religious Fundamentalism**,** Sufism.

Introduction

The spread of Salafi ideology in Sub-Saharan Africa is among the most important religious developments of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This ideology is based on a literal interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith. It draws inspiration from early Islamic reformers like Ibn Taymiyyah and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Salafism promotes a return to the practices of the Prophet Muhammad and the earliest generations of Muslims, known as al-salaf al-salih. While it has become a global movement, its entry and growth in Sub-Saharan Africa occurred against specific socio-political and historical backdrops, including colonial influences, challenges to state-building, and longstanding Islamic scholarship traditions in the region.

Sub-Saharan Africa has historically supported various Islamic reform movements. These range from the jihads led by Usman dan Fodio in the Sokoto Caliphate to the spread of the Tijaniyya and Qadiriyya Sufi orders. However, Salafi ideology brought a unique reformist and often exclusionary approach that questioned the authority of established Sufi practices and local religious leaders. Starting in the mid-twentieth century, the global spread of Salafism gained momentum through new transnational connections. These included education at Middle Eastern universities, funding from Gulf states, and the sharing of religious texts and media. These avenues supported the rise of movements like the Izala in Nigeria, Ansar al-Sunna in Sudan, and various reformist groups throughout East and West Africa.

Nonetheless, the spread of Salafism in Sub-Saharan Africa has not been a straightforward process. It has involved local adaptations, conflicts, and blends, as communities incorporated Salafi beliefs into their existing political, social, and cultural contexts. In some instances, Salafi ideas led to peaceful reformist efforts aimed at

purifying religious practice. In other cases, they fueled militant jihadist activities, as seen with Al-Shabaab in Somalia, Boko Haram in Nigeria, and jihadist groups in the Sahel. This dual nature highlights both the flexibility and the contentious aspect of Salafism as it interacts with African religious environments.

This article looks at the historical pathways of Salafi influence in Sub-Saharan Africa and examines how its ideas have been adapted, resisted, or changed. By placing this phenomenon within the broader context of global Islamic movements and regional reform histories, the study reveals how Salafism has impacted religious authority, political legitimacy, and identity formation in African Muslim communities. It also emphasizes the tension between global Islamic thought and the enduring strength of African religious traditions.

Understanding the Philosophy of Salafism

Salafism is a set of interwoven beliefs, practices, and dogmas held by a particular group of Sunni Muslims who have a strong conviction in the oneness of Allah, *Tauheed*. They believe in the strict application of Islamic laws as against mysticism and all other forms of syncretism. Scriptural literalism, emphasis on puritanical Islam, and exclusivism were the main features of salafists.[1]

Although all Muslims believe in the oneness of Allah, there exist some differences concerning the application and practice of such beliefs. Tauheed implies total submission to the will of Allah as enshrined in the Islamic Sharia law. This is divided into two. First, it involves the belief in the oneness of Allah itself, the owner and the controller of the earth and the universe. Secondly, it entails belief in the sacredness of Allah, to whom all forms of worship and prayers are due. This involves rejecting any authority or power other than Allah. Thus, according to this way of thinking, the only recognizable authority is Allah. Moreover, Sharia is the only acknowledged law that should guide the daily life of a Muslim.

The principle of Tauheed entails knowing God, which is only possible through his revealed books. No objection or question concerning the essence of God, his features or characteristics. One knows and understands Islam through objective and indebt reading and understanding of the Quran and Hadith, the deeds and sayings of the prophet, as interpreted by Al-assalaf, "the first three generations of Muslim scholars that came after the death of the prophet Muhammad".[2] Bent on interpreting religious scriptures based on the teachings of these Ahl-assalaf, some Sunni groups referred to themselves as Salaf hence, Salafism.

All other interpretations of the Quran and Hadith, apart from those by these three generations of scholars, are subject to biases and corruption and therefore should be treated with caution. Since the Salafists traced their ideology to Ahlussalaf, they therefore have the monopoly of understanding what constitutes a proper interpretation of Islamic books, especially those authored by the first generation of Muslim clerics, Ahlu-salaf. Therefore, salafists defended their position based on the hadith that says, "The best people are those of my generation, then those who come after them, then those who come after them. Then, there will come people after them whose testimony precedes their oaths and their oaths precede their testimony."[3]

Specialists in hadith among the salafists rejected some hadith as unauthentic. They separate what is false from hadith and criticize all sorts of mysticism and adulteration in Hadith and, by implication, Islam. Any cleric and his interpretation of Islam are subject to reinterpretation by the Salafi clerics. All pristine versions of Islam are rejected. Those who do not believe in the Salafi interpretation of Islam are denounced as "Kufr" or apostates. Note that what is adulterated, right or wrong, is determined by the Salafists. This was, however, not accepted even by some Sunnis, such as the Sufis, but particularly by the Shiites.

Only Salafists are seen as true Muslims. None salafists are branded "Kufr", "innovators" or "apostates" on the basis of differences in the application of Tauheed and Islamic Sharia law. Salafists dress and behave in a way that is believed to be the ways of the Ahlussalaf, thereby differentiating themselves from other non-salafists. They denounced bowing down in the presence of an elder as un-Islamic. They do not believe in naming ceremonies, collective praying after congregational prayers, and birthday celebration for the birth of the Prophet (Maulud). Other areas of conflict within the Sunni ranks included Tarawih prayers in Ramadan, visiting tombs, etc.[4] Most hit by the derogatory Salafi remarks are the Sufis. They are exclusivists in nature and reserve misgivings toward all forms of Western influences and culture.

[1] Umar, S (2015) Salafi Narratives Against Violent Extremism in Nigeria. Center for Democracy Development Monograph, Zaria,P.3
[2] Umar, S (2015) Salafi Narratives Against Violent Extremism in Nigeria p.3
[3] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 6429, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2533, Muttafaqun Alayhi (authenticity agreed upon)
[4] Last, M (2014) From Dissent to Dissidence: The genesis and Development of Reformist Islamic Groups in Northern Nigeria, In Mustapha, A. Sects and Social Disorder: Muslim Identities and Conflict in Northern Nigeria. James Curry and Boydell & Brewer Inc. New York P. 18-53

The Penetration of Salafi Ideology

While the state apparatus is used to spread Salafi ideology in the Middle East, in Africa, the story is different. This has to do with our pre-colonial and colonial experiences. The Sufi brotherhood was responsible for the introduction of Islam and its development, especially in West Africa. Thus, African pre-colonial traditional authorities were by default Sufis. When the colonialists came, they continued to use Sufi dominated courts and authorities to perpetuate their colonial structures. In Nigeria, for example, the colonialists used Qadriyya-dominated ruling aristocracies under the indirect rule system to advance their cause. The French also used the Mauridiyyah Sufi brotherhood in places like Senegal to advance its economic policies of cash crop production. These exchanges of relationship and royalties between the colonial authorities and the Sufi brotherhoods have continued to exist even in the post-colonial African states. The continued romance between the two, the political class, and the Sufis had provided the Sufis with an additional opportunity to dominate the state apparatus. Thus, in the wake of Salafism in places like Nigeria, the government was criticized, and Sufis' romance with the government was challenged. The attacks on the government especially, the criticism of corrupt public officials by the emerging Salafists, sound strange to not only the Sufi clerics, but the Sufi-dominated governments. The Sufis therefore, began to use their position in government to frustrate the spread of Salafisim in Nigeria. This we have seen in places like Kano, Zaria, Sokoto, among others.

Thus, while in some Middle Eastern countries, it is the Salafists who use state power to impose their creed and ideology on other Muslims, in Nigeria, it is the Sufis who were using the state apparatus to suppress the spread of Salafism. In Kano, for example, there was a crisis between the Salafists led by the teacher of late Muhammed Yusuf, Sheikh Jafar Mahmud Adam, and the Sufi-led aristocracies, over the erection of a Salafist mosque. In Zaria, Sheikh Albani had to fight the Zazzau Emirate to erect his Jummu'at mosque. Tensions and confrontations were recorded in most northern cities during the 1980s when Izala, a pro-Salafists movement, was introduced. The movement was castigating and denouncing sufi-dariqa mysticism and belief, which the later did not take lightly. Both the Salafists and non-Salafi Muslim groups have, in the wake of Izala, deviated from teaching fundamentals of Islam to defending and spreading their ideology and creed. This led to some serious conflict to the extent that the Federal Military Government under Gen.Muhammadu Buhari, banned public sermons and preaching during the 80s.

In the absence of a state apparatus, money, charity, and scholarships are used to spread Salafism in Africa. In Tanzania, for example, government officials were bribed by the Kuwait government to allow for the spread of the new ideology. In effect, the African Muslim Agency, and some Saudi- owned companies bribed government officials to allow for the spread of Wahhabism, otherwise called Salafism.[5] In Mali, Nigeria, among others, Salafist mosques were built and charities provided by Saudi Arabia. Scholarships were also offered by the Saudi Government for the prospective Salafi youth to study in the University of Madina. The returned graduates will now be agents for spreading such beliefs and ideologies in their home countries. Prominent Salafists in Nigeria include Dr Ahmad BUK, Sheik Jafar Mahmud Adam, and Dr. Sani Umar Rijin Lemo.

Thus, Saudi Arabia, being the birthplace of Islam, becomes the grand sponsor of Salafism world over. All Salafists have, in one way or another, allied with the Middle Eastern power. They respect the Saudi monarchy to such that criticizing it is seen as synonymous with unbelief. Other Sunnis, particularly the Sufis have little respect for the Saudi monarchy, which they derogatively call Wahhabists. The Shiites have a complete disregard for Saudi, due to their differences in ideology. Their allegiance is to Iran. The ideological conflicts between the two Middle Eastern powers, Saudi Arabia and Iran, explain the bitter struggles, wars, conflicts, and terrorism in places like Syria, Iraq, Yemen, among others.

The Extremist Salafist, the Moderate Salafist and the other Muslims

While the Salafists accused the Sufis and other non-Salafists of bad innovations in Islam, they too are introducing new religious practices into Islam, which is also seen as an act of innovation by the sufists. Thus, mosques and madrasas are now divided along ideological differences. One Muslim community now sees the other as its enemy. Many marriages are broken, and mosques are destroyed.[6] Thus, within the Sunni ranks, some are seen as more Sunnis, the Ahlussalaf; others are seen as non-Sunnis, the Sufis, for example. This formed the beginning of factions among the Sunni ranks, out of which fundamentalism later emerged.

[5] Solomon, H. (2015) Terrorism and Counter Terrorism in Africa: fighting insurgency From Al-shabab, Ansar Dine and Boko Haram, Palgrave Macmilan,UK

[6] Mustapha, A. and Bunza M U (2014) Contemporary Islamic Sects and Groups in Northern Nigeria. In Mustapha, A (eds) Sects and Social Disorder: Muslim Identities and Conflict in Northern Nigeria. James Curry and Boydell & Brewer Inc. New York .P.54-97

Within the *Ahlussalaf*, there emerged another division, this time around, between the extremist Salafists and moderate Salafists. The two are always in constant critique of one another's methods. The moderate Salafists do not believe in the monopoly of Islamic knowledge by the extreme Salafi scholars and reject excommunicating other Muslims on the basis of differences on Tauheed and Shari'a. The moderate Salafists simply see other Muslims as *Yan-bidah*. Contrary to the extreme Salafists, the moderate Salafists, associate and mingle with other Muslims in matters of religion and other worldly affairs. Both the moderate and extremist Salafists however, ally themselves with the political structures and state apparatus through which, they pressed for their ideology and creed on other Muslims. Such an attempt by the Salafists to impose their creed on other Muslims using the state apparatus led to confrontations between the Salafists and the Shiites and in some instances with Sufi clerics. Infighting between the moderate Salafist and the extreme Salafist is however recorded. However, attempts to use state resources to further it ideology have resulted in a number of conflicts. In Iraq, Saddam Hussein's crack down on Shiites protesters is instrumental in the emergence of radicals who later became terrorist groups.[7] In Yemen, power tussle between the Shiites and the Sunnis have brought President Abdu Rabbo Mansur Hadi's government to its knees and turned Yamenis into warring parties.[8] These contests between extreme the Salafists and non-Salafists cannot be ruled out in the Gulf War and the subsequent events that polarized the Middle East into warring parties.

Salafism, Raptures, and Fundamentalist Ascendancy

At the time when Salafism was making an inroad into the Nigerian area, Western secularism had been entrenched fully. Realizing how much damage the secular laws had done to Islam, the Salafists began to question Western secularism. Since Salafism is anchored on the strong belief in the oneness of Allah (Tauheed) and the superiority of God's revealed book (Qur'an) over any book, they do not believe in the superiority of the nation's constitution over the Qur'an. A leading Salafi cleric, for example, was disturbed by the first article of subsection (3) of the 1999 Nigerian constitution that reads: "If any other law is inconsistent with the provisions of this Constitution, this Constitution shall prevail, and that other law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void." Being the custodian of religious knowledge and its application, the Salafists found this particularly disturbing. In one of his sermons, Sheikh Giro Argungu argued that anyone who believes in the constitution is an apostate, "you must believe that the constitution is untrue." This according to Giro, is based on the sayings of God: *(i)…… whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are the disbelievers. Qur'an 5:44. (ii) whosoever does not judge by that which Allah has revealed, such are the unjust, Qur'an5: 45.*

While analyzing the verses, Sheikh Giro argued that Abdullahi bin Abbas' exegesis of these verses emphasizes only God's laws that Muslims should believe in. Any judgment that is not based on the Sharia should be considered fictitious. Giro concluded that "if in your mind you don't believe the constitution is an act of unbelief, in your mind you did not believe that the constitution is untrue, your *Islam* has not been accepted."

On a general note, the Salafists believe that if you abide by the constitution and inwardly believe it is idolatry, but you accept it based on the principle of *maslaha*, you are safe. But when you wholeheartedly believe in it and refuse to see its wrong, then you are an apostate based on the sayings of God, "Whoever disbelieves in Allah after his belief - except one who was forced while his heart is at peace with the faith - but whoever opens their breasts to disbelief, on them is wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a terrible torment" Qur'an 16:106

However, the Salafists agreed with the constitution, abided by and even participated in some court cases, and romance with the secular government. Despite the threat posed by Western- induced democracy, Nigerian Salafists neither boycott elections nor adopt violence to fight democracy. In fact, they work and hope to perpetuate their aims through the current democratic settings. In 1982, for example, the grand patron of salafism in Nigeria, Shekh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi, urged his followers to go out and vote enmasse. In fact, according to him, "politics is more important than prayer"[9]

Even though the Salafists have participated in the electoral process, they reject and detest democracy. They do not, however see confrontation as an option, because the laid-down procedure for jihad in Islam is not yet ripe. They resort to mobilisation and preaching, envisaging a day when Islam would guide the conduct, behavior, and culture of Nigerian Muslims. The Salafists adopt what can be regarded as *Taqiya*—involving with the secular government physically while rejecting it in their minds. They envisage a day when Muslims would be guided by

[7] Andrew C. Iraq's Oppressed Majority, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/iraqs-oppressed-majority-95250996/

[8] Mohammed G. Army splits that let Yemen's capital fall augur new risks. https://www.reuters.com/article/cnews-us-yemen-sanaa-insight-idCAKCN0JB1NV20141127

[9] Mustapha, A.(2014) Religious Sectarianism, Poor Governance and Conflict. In Mustapha, A (eds) Sects and Social Disorder: Muslim Identities and Conflict in Northern Nigeria. James Curry and Boydell & Brewer Inc. New York . P.199- 220

Islamic Sharia Law. The Sharia debates of the 1970s; the wave of Shari'a between 2000 and 2001 across many northern states was part of such an attempt by state governors, championed by the Salafi clerics, to establish a system that would govern the conduct and behavior of Muslims according to the Islamic Shari'a law. That is why most of the Shari'a committee members across the states were Salafists.

But while moderate Salafists accepted the new world order as regard to democracy and Western secularism, radicals wanting a strict application of Islamic Shari'a Laws were emerging within them. There was a call for restructuring the existing political structures either peacefully or violently. In Maiduguri, for example, a leading Salafi disciple, Muhammed Yusuf, had challenged the religious credentials of his core Salafi teachers, Sheikh Jafar Mahmud Adam and Abba Aji, for example. While Muhammed Yusuf was calling for Jihad, his teachers expelled him. Within the shortest time, this Salafi student, who finds it very difficult to integrate and disintegrate Salafi ideology with Jihadism, became very popular in Maiduguri, calling for jihad. Thus, the emergence of fundamentalism cannot be dissociated from the ideological development of Salafism.

However, to be fair to the salafists, while it may be accepted that the introduction of salafism was an important factor in the renewed vigor for sharia through jihad, it cannot be the sole reason for the emergence of jihadists in Africa or elsewhere in the Middle East. In Nigeria for example, neither Bin Fodio nor Maitastine were a Salafists. They launched their jihad, if such it cab called, even before the Salafi ideology was introduced to the Nigerian area. Both were Sufis. In Somalia, we have seen how the Sufis formed their own terrorist group, (Alussunnna waljamaa, ASWAJ). However, Salafist doctrines formed the border lines of the jihadist ideologist and later terrorism.

Conclusion

The spread of Salafi ideology in Sub-Saharan Africa is both a historical and a contemporary issue, influenced by global religious movements and deeply rooted in local cultures. At its heart, Salafism focuses on strict adherence to scripture, maintaining doctrinal purity, and rejecting new practices in Islam. However, its arrival in Africa has not been uniform or without resistance. Through educational networks, missionary work, and funding from the Middle East, Salafi ideas have emerged in various reform movements, always in conflict with established Islamic traditions, especially the Sufi orders that have long been influential.

The study shows that the spread of Salafi ideology has led to different paths of adaptation. Some branches have grown into moderate reform projects that stress personal faith, religious cleansing, and community renewal. Others have taken more radical directions, combining Salafi claims of authenticity with political frustration and global jihadist beliefs. This divide explains the presence of moderate Salafists, extremist Salafists, and other Muslim groups, all vying for recognition and religious authority in Africa.

The disruptions and rise of fundamentalism that have come with the spread of Salafism are also essential to consider. By questioning established religious authorities and promoting narratives of cultural and political resistance, Salafism has changed the landscape of Islamic identity in Sub-Saharan Africa. In its most extreme forms, it has supported violent groups like Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and jihadist factions in the Sahel, highlighting the dangerous potential of Salafi ideology when linked with local issues and global conspiracy theories.

In conclusion, the historical paths, local adaptations, and disruptions of Salafism in Sub-Saharan Africa reveal its complexity as both a religious reform movement and a trigger for fundamentalism. Understanding these factors is vital for enhancing the study of African Islam and shaping policy responses that tackle the ideological, social, and political aspects of extremism. A detailed look at the various forms of Salafism—moderate, reformist, and radical—provides a way to engage with the movement thoughtfully, rather than viewing it as a uniform or solely violent entity.

The Future Of ECOWAS In A Changing World Order: New Politics And Emerging Powers

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Abstract
The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) stands at a crossroad as global power dynamics shift and new political realities emerge. Established in 1975 to foster economic integration and regional stability, ECOWAS now faces complex challenges, including political instability, democratic backsliding, security threats, and economic uncertainties. The withdrawal of French military forces from several West African nations, the growing presence of Russian mercenaries, and the increasing influence of emerging powers such as China and India are reshaping the region's geopolitical landscape. Additionally, internal conflicts, governance struggles, and the stalled implementation of a single regional currency further complicate ECOWAS's efforts toward deeper integration. This paper explored the evolving role of ECOWAS in this changing world order, analyzing the impact of global and regional shifts on its political and economic future. While external influences present both opportunities and risks, ECOWAS has the potential to strengthen its strategic position by enhancing regional cooperation, promoting good governance, and adapting to new economic realities. The paper concluded that the organization's ability to navigate these transformations will determine its long-term relevance and effectiveness in shaping West Africa's future. It was therefore recommended that the organization take a proactive approach to navigating the challenges posed by global political shifts, ensuring that it remains a strong advocate for West African interests. By embracing strategic diplomatic engagement, strengthening regional identity, and reinforcing integration efforts, ECOWAS can secure a more prosperous and stable future for the region.
Keywords: ECOWAS, World Order, Integration, New Politics, Emerging Powers.

Introduction

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), founded in 1975, has played a pivotal role in promoting regional integration and stability in West Africa. Its establishment was driven by the desire to enhance economic cooperation among member states. The integration efforts have since expanded to encompass political stability, peacekeeping, and conflict resolution. As the global landscape shifts dramatically due to geopolitical tensions, economic transformations, and the rise of emerging powers, the future of ECOWAS is more uncertain than ever. An analysis of recent developments revealed a complex interplay between political, economic, and social factors that shape the future of this vital regional organization (Olufowobi, 2022; Moller, 2021; Ajani, 2023).

This is the focus of this paper as it explored how these changing dynamics affect ECOWAS, considering the internal political challenges faced by member states and the growing influence of countries such as China and India. It argued that while ECOWAS faces significant hurdles, there are also unique opportunities to strengthen regional cooperation and resilience. For the methodology, the paper relied on a qualitative research approach using content analysis, and it was based on secondary sources.

Historical Context of ECOWAS

Launched with the aim of fostering economic cooperation among its member states, ECOWAS has evolved to address numerous political and security issues in the sub-region. Its establishment marked a crucial step towards regional integration and efficient resource allocation, enhancing collective bargaining power on the international stage. Over the years, ECOWAS has utilized various methodologies, including peacekeeping operations and economic sanctions, to navigate conflicts that threaten regional stability. Key milestones in its development include the signing of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, which aimed to facilitate trade and mobility among member states. The organization has also played a critical role in responding to crises, such as in Liberia and Sierra Leone, providing peacekeeping troops and mediation efforts (ECOWAS, 2021).

In its early years, ECOWAS focused on economic collaboration, particularly in trade and infrastructure. The Community's primary objective was to establish a free trade area by eliminating trade barriers, tariffs, and restrictions among the member states. The creation of a common market was intended to enable the free

movement of people, goods, services, and capital. In addition to economic goals, the organization sought to strengthen cooperation in various sectors, such as energy, transportation, and agriculture (Adebajo, 2002). Over time, ECOWAS expanded its focus to include political cooperation, seeking to influence peace and security across West Africa.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, ECOWAS became more involved in political and security issues in the region, particularly in response to the outbreak of civil conflicts in countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone. ECOWAS, through its intervention force, ECOMOG (ECOWAS Monitoring Group), played a significant role in mediating and managing conflicts. While these interventions were controversial, they underscored ECOWAS's commitment to regional peace and stability. In particular, ECOWAS's role in peacekeeping efforts was a testament to its evolving mandate from purely economic to a more comprehensive political and security body (Ojo, 2014).

ECOWAS has also sought to influence political systems in the region, advocating for democratic governance and human rights. The organization has set out protocols for the promotion of democracy and good governance, with clear guidelines on political stability and constitutional processes. One of the significant achievements in this regard was the establishment of the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in 2001, which stipulates sanctions against governments that come to power through undemocratic means. This shift towards a more politically engaged ECOWAS has been crucial in shaping the development of governance structures in West Africa (Chauveau, 2004).

Despite these successes, ECOWAS faces several challenges in achieving its objectives. The region continues to struggle with issues of poverty, underdevelopment, and political instability. Furthermore, the organization has faced criticism for its limited capacity to enforce decisions and manage conflicts effectively. The need for stronger institutional structures and greater financial independence remains a critical issue. Nevertheless, ECOWAS has made significant strides in fostering regional cooperation, with increasing involvement in peacekeeping and promoting democratic governance (ECOWAS, 2021). As the region grapples with complex security threats such as terrorism and civil unrest, ECOWAS's historical framework becomes increasingly relevant in discussions about sovereignty, collective security, and regional identity.

Changing World Order

The current global landscape, having been reshaped by the COVID-19 pandemic and rising geopolitical tensions, poses new challenges for regional organizations like ECOWAS. The pandemic highlighted the interconnectedness of global health and economics, revealing vulnerabilities in national systems that require collective action (World Bank, 2021). With the shift from a Western-dominated world order to one where emerging economies are gaining prominence, West Africa finds itself at the intersection of new political influences. The rise of China as a global power has had far-reaching implications for Africa, not only in terms of investment but also in terms of shifting diplomatic allegiances (Alden & Large, 2019). China’s Belt and Road Initiative, for instance, has led to significant investment in infrastructure across the continent, recalibrating traditional power dynamics. Critics argue that such engagements often come with hidden costs, including debt dependency and limited local involvement in projects (Corkin, 2021).

Meanwhile, the United States is reassessing its strategies in Africa, with a renewed focus on counter-terrorism and trade relations, highlighting the need for region-specific approaches. As global rivalries intensify, particularly between China and the West, there is an opportunity for ECOWAS to position itself strategically to advocate for West African interests. Furthermore, emerging powers like India and Brazil are also showing increasing interest in the region, leading to a multipolar dynamic that could either strengthen or complicate ECOWAS’s role in fostering regional integration. This shifting landscape requires a nuanced understanding of the interplay among global, regional, and local factors that shape political realities in West Africa.

New Political Dynamics within ECOWAS

Internally, ECOWAS faces significant political challenges, including governance issues, democratic backsliding, and civil unrest in several member states. Recent coups in Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso have raised questions about the organization’s ability to maintain stability and uphold democratic norms. These actions challenge ECOWAS’s foundational principles, which emphasize democracy, human rights, and good governance. The organization tends to respond to coups with condemnation and sanctions, yet the effectiveness of these measures has been disputed. Stakeholders argue that while sanctions may achieve temporary compliance, they do not address the root causes of instability, such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of political participation (Mensah, 2021).

The region has a history of political instability exacerbated by economic hardship, often prompting citizens to support military interventions as alternatives to ineffective civilian governments. ECOWAS has responded to these crises by reinforcing its commitment to democratic governance through the adoption of various protocols. Notable among these is the 2001 Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, which outlines measures for promoting democratic practices among member states. This protocol mandates that elections be held as scheduled, and it provides guidelines for fair political processes. However, enforcing these protocols has proven to be challenging, particularly in member states grappling with deep-seated issues such as ethnic divisions and systemic corruption (Dawda, 2023; Kone, 2022).

Moreover, the organization's efforts are often hampered by the diverging priorities and interests of member states. Some countries may be more willing to accept intervention in neighbor states, while others resist external influence, citing sovereignty concerns. The resultant fragmentation complicates ECOWAS's ability to function as a cohesive body for conflict resolution. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing governance weaknesses, exposing the limitations of health and social welfare systems across the region. The impact of the pandemic also highlights the interconnection between health security and political stability, prompting ECOWAS to adopt a more integrated approach to governance that encompasses health, economic, and security dimensions (Ogunyemi, 2022).

On the security front, ECOWAS has faced rising threats from extremist groups operating in the Sahel region. The emergence of groups linked to Al-Qaeda and ISIS has pushed the organization to evolve its security strategy from peacekeeping to a broader counter-terrorism approach. This transition is reflected in ECOWAS's renewed commitment to the African Standby Force (ASF), which aims to provide rapid response capabilities to crises. However, the effectiveness of this zapproach will depend on the commitment of member states to allocate necessary resources and personnel for regional security initiatives. The internal dynamics of ECOWAS are further complicated by regional rivalries, such as those between Nigeria and Ghana, which can hinder collective action. Despite these hurdles, there is a growing recognition of the need for a unified regional approach to governance and security, underscoring the importance of collaboration and consensus-building within ECOWAS (Aning & Edgerton, 2021).

The Expulsion of French Troops and the Role of Russian Mercenaries

A critical shift in the region's geopolitical landscape has been the expulsion of French troops from several West African countries, including Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. France's long-standing military presence in the region, particularly through Operation Barkhane, was aimed at countering jihadist insurgencies. However, growing anti-French sentiment, fueled by allegations of neocolonial influence and inefficacy in addressing security threats, led to demands for French withdrawal. These sentiments were further amplified by public protests and political rhetoric from newly established military governments in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. In January 2025, the Ivory Coast also announced the departure of French troops, following similar moves by Senegal and Chad, further reducing French influence in the region (Associated Press, 2025; Financial Times, 2024).

Following France's withdrawal, some West African nations have turned to Russia for security assistance, with the presence of Russian mercenaries, particularly the Wagner Group, increasing in the region. Russia has positioned itself as an alternative security partner, offering military training, equipment, and direct combat support. The involvement of Russian mercenaries has had mixed implications—while some governments view them as a reliable force in fighting insurgencies, others criticize their human rights record and lack of accountability. Reports indicate that Moscow has expanded its influence significantly in Africa, with Russian private military contractors playing a key role in various conflicts (Le Monde, 2024).

ECOWAS now faces the challenge of navigating this shifting geopolitical environment. The growing influence of Russia and the reduction of Western military presence could reshape regional security dynamics, potentially altering the balance of power within ECOWAS. The organization's ability to address these changes will depend on its capacity to maintain diplomatic cohesion among member states while strengthening regional security mechanisms (Aning & Edgerton, 2021).

Despite these hurdles, there is a growing recognition of the need for a unified regional approach to governance and security, underscoring the importance of collaboration and consensus-building within ECOWAS.

Emerging Powers and ECOWAS

Increasingly, ECOWAS must navigate its relations with various emerging powers. The engagement of China, India, and Russia in Africa presents both opportunities and challenges for the region. China's investments in infrastructure have been transformative, allowing for greater connectivity and access to markets. However, there

are concerns about the long-term implications of increased Chinese presence, particularly regarding debt sustainability and local labor conditions. Reports indicate that controversial loan agreements and unregulated labor practices often accompany these investments, raising alarms about potential neocolonial dynamics (Ogunniyi, 2021).

India's growing influence through trade and technology partnerships has been characterized by a more decentralised approach, focusing on skill transfer and capacity building. Initiatives such as the India-Africa Forum have strengthened diplomatic ties, bolstering economic collaboration in sectors like information technology and healthcare. However, challenges remain in ensuring that these partnerships are equitable and beneficial for local populations, particularly in terms of technology transfer and job creation. In contrast, Russia has made strategic moves to establish its influence in West Africa by offering military cooperation and arms sales. Russia's engagements often hinge on opportunistic diplomatic ties, which can complicate the efforts of regional organizations promoting collective security and governance (Ogundele, 2023).

Within this context, the role of the United States remains critical, as it re-evaluates its engagement strategy towards Africa amid changing political and economic realities. U.S. policies often emphasize democratic governance and human rights, providing a counter-narrative to the often pragmatic approaches of emerging powers. This dynamic creates a unique space for ECOWAS to advocate for a balanced foreign policy that incorporates the interests of its member states while promoting sustainable development (Smith, 2023).

Understanding the balance of power fostered by these relationships will be crucial for ECOWAS's future. The organization must enhance its strategic positioning by fostering partnerships beyond traditional ties while maintaining its agency in regional politics. Engaging with emerging powers could yield invaluable resources and support for ECOWAS's development agendas, but the organization must remain vigilant in ensuring that such partnerships align with its overarching goals of regional stability and prosperity (Okoro, 2023).

The Adoption of a Single Currency and France's Intervention

A major economic initiative within ECOWAS has been the proposed adoption of a single currency, the ECO, aimed at fostering greater regional integration and reducing reliance on foreign currencies, particularly the CFA franc. The ECO is expected to enhance intra-regional trade, lower transaction costs, and strengthen monetary policy coordination among member states. Proponents argue that a unified currency will promote macroeconomic stability and reduce external vulnerabilities, positioning West Africa as a stronger economic bloc (Bello, 2022).

However, the adoption of the ECO has faced significant obstacles, including disparities in economic performance, varying levels of fiscal discipline, and political hesitancy among member states. One of the biggest challenges has been France's role in the currency transition. Eight ECOWAS member states currently use the CFA franc, which is pegged to the euro and backed by the French Treasury. France has historically maintained influence over the region's monetary policies, and its involvement in the ECO transition has sparked concerns about continued external control over West African economies (Project Syndicate, 2021).

While some countries, particularly Nigeria, advocate for a truly independent regional currency free from European influence, others—especially the CFA franc-using states—have shown reluctance to sever economic ties with France. France's intervention in the ECO project, including its push to maintain a monetary guarantee, has led to delays and divisions within ECOWAS. As a result, the implementation of the single currency remains uncertain, with some critics arguing that the project may only serve as a rebranded version of the CFA franc rather than a genuinely autonomous West African currency (Société Générale, 2024).

Opportunities and Challenges for ECOWAS

Emerging powers offer substantial opportunities for development, particularly in areas such as infrastructure, trade, and technology. The increased investment in roads, railways, and energy projects promotes economic growth and competitiveness among member states. However, these opportunities come with challenges that include the risk of dependency, unequal power dynamics, and the potential erosion of sovereignty. Critics warn that while emerging powers can provide much-needed resources and investments, reliance on foreign entities for development could weaken local governance structures and autonomy (Johnson, 2023).

The demands of globalization also necessitate that ECOWAS adapt to changing economic landscapes. With increasing competition from other regions, particularly from East Asia, West Africa must ensure that it remains an attractive destination for business and investment. Enhancing intra-regional trade through initiatives such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) offers significant potential for economic diversification and resilience. ECOWAS can play a pivotal role in facilitating the implementation of these initiatives by harmonizing trade policies and removing barriers between member states. The successful realization of such

frameworks helps not only to bolster economic growth but also to strengthen the collective bargaining power of the region (Salami, 2022).

Another challenge ECOWAS faces is the growing prevalence of non-state actors, including armed groups and transnational criminal organizations. These groups threaten regional stability, often exploiting weak governance and socioeconomic grievances within communities. ECOWAS's existing conflict prevention mechanisms must evolve to address these new realities effectively. Developing comprehensive strategies that incorporate community engagement, socioeconomic development, and education can help mitigate risks associated with non-state actors. Moreover, the internal political climate within member states can further complicate ECOWAS's efforts. Instances of political instability and civil unrest contribute to regional insecurity and make it difficult for the organization to achieve its objectives. Addressing the root causes of such instability requires a multi-faceted approach, encompassing not only political reforms but also economic empowerment and social cohesion initiatives (Nwankwo, 2023).

Climate change also poses a significant challenge to regional development and stability. West Africa is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate shifts, including food insecurity, water scarcity, and increased migration. These factors can exacerbate existing tensions and contribute to conflict, necessitating that ECOWAS integrate climate change considerations into its security and development strategies. Partnerships with international organizations focused on climate resilience can provide additional resources and expertise to bolster regional capacity.

In fostering dialogue and cooperation with emerging powers, ECOWAS must ensure that its engagements are based on mutual respect and win-win outcomes. This will require navigating complex geopolitical landscapes while advocating for the interests of its member states. Establishing frameworks that promote accountability and transparency in international partnerships will safeguard against the pitfalls of neocolonialism and empower member states to retain agency over their development trajectories (Bassey, 2023).

In light of these opportunities and challenges, it is vital for ECOWAS to develop a comprehensive strategic framework that addresses the complexities of today's geopolitical landscape. By balancing its engagements with emerging powers while maintaining a focus on democracy, governance, and economic stability, ECOWAS can create a resilient and united West Africa (Akindele, 2023).

The Future Outlook for ECOWAS

The future of ECOWAS will depend on its ability to adapt to new political realities while maintaining the integrity and cooperation of its member states. Strengthening institutional frameworks and ensuring accountability within the organization can enhance its effectiveness in navigating challenges. The establishment of platforms for sharing best practices and experiences among member states would also foster mutual learning and collaborative problem-solving. (Bamidele, 2023)

ECOWAS's role in regional security will also evolve as geopolitical dynamics shift. Leveraging partnerships with international organizations, such as the African Union and the United Nations, can enhance its effectiveness in conflict prevention and resolution (Bah, 2020). Collaborative security frameworks that incorporate local communities will increase the legitimacy and effectiveness of operations conducted under ECOWAS mandates (Omotola & Saliu, 2019). Environmental sustainability must be at the forefront of future planning. Climate adaptation strategies can no longer be sidelined; the organization should lead efforts to develop frameworks prioritizing sustainable development goals that address environmental degradation and resource management (UNDP, 2022). Investing in green technologies and renewable energy sources will also secure a more sustainable economic future for West Africa (Adebayo, 2023).

Additionally, ECOWAS must strengthen its diplomatic outreach to ensure that member states are effectively represented on international platforms. This includes engaging with global financial institutions and development partners to secure funding and support for regional initiatives. As external influences continue to evolve, ECOWAS must remain proactive in addressing potential challenges that could arise from global rivalries, particularly in the context of competition for resources and political influence. Developing an agile foreign policy that embraces a multilateral approach will strengthen the organization's position in these diplomatic negotiations (Kabba, 2023).

The inclusion of women in leadership positions and decision-making processes is vital for ECOWAS's future. Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment will not only enhance governance but also lead to more comprehensive and inclusive policies reflective of the entire population's needs.

Conclusion

As West Africa navigates a rapidly changing global landscape, understanding the dynamics affecting ECOWAS is essential. Emerging powers significantly influence regional politics, presenting both opportunities and challenges. To ensure the future success and stability of the region, ECOWAS must embrace a proactive approach, strengthening its institutional framework while fostering unity among its diverse member states. A commitment to democratic governance, sustainable development, and regional cooperation will be pivotal in shaping a resilient West African community equipped to face contemporary challenges. By capitalizing on the opportunities presented by emerging powers while preserving its core principles, ECOWAS can secure a brighter and more integrated future for the region it serves.

Additionally, economic sustainability and self-reliance should be prioritized by investing in industrialization, trade facilitation, and human capital development. By leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), ECOWAS can enhance intra-regional trade and improve competitiveness, reducing reliance on external actors.

Security remains a pressing concern for the region, and ECOWAS must enhance its response mechanisms to tackle emerging threats such as terrorism, insurgency, and transnational crime. Strengthening security cooperation among member states and leveraging strategic partnerships with international organizations will be crucial for maintaining stability. Initiatives like the African Standby Force (ASF) and intelligence-sharing frameworks should be expanded to ensure a more coordinated and effective security strategy.

Beyond security, ECOWAS must place greater emphasis on social development, particularly in areas such as education, healthcare, and digital transformation. Investing in youth empowerment and technological advancements will equip future generations with the tools necessary to drive sustainable progress. Enhancing digital connectivity and implementing e-governance initiatives can improve service delivery and bridge development gaps across the region.

Ultimately, the success of ECOWAS will depend on its ability to adapt, innovate, and forge strategic alliances while upholding the principles of democracy, human rights, and regional solidarity. The organization must take a proactive approach to navigating the challenges posed by global political shifts, ensuring that it remains a strong advocate for West African interests. By embracing strategic diplomatic engagement, strengthening regional identity, and reinforcing integration efforts, ECOWAS can secure a more prosperous and stable future for the region.

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Digitization And Information Communication Technologies For Museum Development

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Abstract
The importance of Museums to the preservation of culture and artifacts cannot be overemphasized. However, the emergence of internet-enabled information and communication technology (ICT) has improved the operational efficiency of Museums through the digital storage of information, networking, and access, sharing, and communication. This paper examines the relevance of technology, digitalization of museum properties through revolution by providing an array of tools that offers opportunities for learning institutions all over the world to become more vibrant in the acquisition of museum objects. It deal with the history of ICT, Museum storage work, collection management, easy retrieval of information, digital database, and how information technology has helped museum in the presentation of their collections.
Keywords: Digitization, Museum, information, communication, Development, Technology

Introduction

From time immemorial, the way traditional museum exhibits are limited to leading the audience into showrooms to view the original artworks. However, due to the limitations of factors such as exhibition space, venues, and schedules, the total numbers of direct contacts with the exhibits are in the minority. Moreover, since the antiquities belong to all citizens, the traditional museum has a predicament where owners cannot freely acquire information about their properties.

According to the status of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), a museum "is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society, which communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment". Hence, an important role of a museum is to make its heritage become a part of our life, much like the functions of a library. Based on this aspiration, the digital curation of a museum has become a common pursuit in both the academic and public sectors.

Technology and societal impact play complementary roles to each other in museum digitization. The value and function of cultural heritage are realized through knowledge sharing and the exchange of ideas. Hence, the focus of the digital museum should be on the visitor's experience rather than the technology itself. However, without the aid of advanced technology, such a goal cannot be materialized effectively. The term digitization is often used when diverse forms of information, such as objects, text, sound, images, audio-visual, are converted into an electronic digital code that can be read by computers or other electronic devices.

Digitization and Information Communication

Digitization and Information Communication Technology (ICT) is an extended term for Information Technology (IT) which stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications, computers as well as necessary enterprise software, storage, and audio-visual systems, which enable users to access, store, retrieve, transmit, and manipulate information.

Today's digital revolution is providing a dizzying array of tools that offers opportunities for learning institutions all over the world to become more vibrant and accessible. This revolution provides the means to share vital information, enabling people to learn more, shape informed opinions, and decisions in their daily lives.

ICT provides the museum with a very powerful set of tools, both for the day-to-day work of managing collections and for reaching out to our visitors, sometimes in new and interesting ways. Hence, many museums are now important destinations along with other local tourist routes, acting as a social meeting point for the different groups of visitors, as well as serving as a significant research centre. Therefore, the role of information and communication technology for museum development cannot be overemphasized.

In view of the above, it is pertinent for museums as an institution to seek new and improved ways to operate and communicate with visitors and the environment whilst working towards their main mission: producing cultural value for the society. The social technologies have radically changed the way society

functions, from daily aspect to radical changes. In the case of museums, the new technologies can improve and change the institution's operative and conceptual aspects.

There is a place for both the physical and digital, with each complementing and leveraging the other. The physical museum offers visitors the opportunity to experience the real object and share their impressions with family and friends, and also provides the content, expertise, and collections that digital museums draw upon. Digital access can then provide limitless opportunities for engagement and lifelong learning.

History of ICT

Basically, as long as people have been around, information technology has been around because there were always ways of communicating through technologies available at that time. There are four (4) main ages that divide up the history of information technology. only the latest age (electronic) and some of the electromechanical ages really affect us today, but it is important to learn about how we got to the point we are with technology today.

Ages

- **Pre-mechanical**

The pre-mechanical age is the earliest age of information technology. it can be defined as the time between 3000 B.C and 1450 A.D. When humans first started communicating, they would try to use languages or simple picture drawings known as petroglyphs, which were usually carved in rock. Early alphabets were developed, such as the Phoenician alphabet.

As alphabets became more popular and more people were writing information down, pens and paper began to be developed. It started off as just marks in wet clay, but later, paper was created out of the papyrus plant. The most popular kind of paper made was probably by the Chinese, who made paper from rags. Now that people were writing a lot of information down, they needed ways to keep it all in permanent storage. This is where the first books and libraries were developed. The Egyptians made scrolls for preserving written information.

Also during this period was the first numbering system. Around 100 A.D, the first 1-9 numbering system was created by people from India. However, it wasn't until 875 A.D (775 years later) that the number 0 was invented. When numbers were created, people wanted stuff to do with them, so they created calculators. A calculator was the very first sign of an information processor. The popular model of that time was the abacus.

- **Mechanical**

The mechanical age is when we first start to see connections between our current technology and its ancestors. The mechanical age can be described as the period between 1450 and 1840 A.D. A lot of new technologies were developed in this era as there was a large explosion in interest in this area. Technologies like the slide rule (an analog computer used for multiplying and dividing) were invented.

- **Electromechanical**

The electromechanical age can be described as the time between 1840 and 1940. This was the beginning of telecommunication. The Telegraph was created in the early 1800s. More codes were created by Samuel Morse in 1835. The telephone (one of the most popular forms of communication) was created by Alexander Graham Bell in 1876. The first radio was developed by Guglielmo Marconi in 1894. All of these were extremely crucial emerging technologies that led to big advances in the information technology field.

- **Electronic**

The electronic age is what we currently live in. It can be described as the time between 1940 and now. The ENIAC was the first high-speed, digital computer capable of being reprogrammed to solve a full range of computing problems. This computer was designed to be used by the U.S Army for artillery firing tables. It mainly used a vacuum tube to do its calculations. Also, during this era, high-level programming languages were created, such as FORTRAN and COBOL.

In view of the foregoing and coupled with the brief history of information and communication technology agreeably juxtaposed here, it is therefore pertinent at this juncture to highlight how some of these ICTs are applicable to museums for development.

Collection Management/Museum Research Work

Collection Management System (CMS) can be an available tool for simplifying the process of collecting and managing information about the objects in your care. The CMS can also often be used to create reports, catalogues, and other documents that help people to find out more about collections. For quick finding and comparing with similar valuable, computer databases and software/applications for virtual reconstructions

are used. They make researchers work easier and give directions of thinking, or proof of the authenticity and real scientific content of the excavation/bought/donated objects.

Museum Storage Work

Museum collection storage is both a physical space and ongoing process. It is a rededicated space used for storing museum objects, natural history specimens, and archival materials. This space is designed or upgraded to meet standards and requirements for the preservation, protection, and accessibility of collections. Most of the museums have thousand and even millions exponents. They should be kept in a certain order. That's why PC applications are often used for arranging the order in the storage. The storage keeper fills in this database every day and registers all changes in the movement and localization of each exhibit.

Exhibition/Showcase Management

Every exhibition has its own plan that includes exhibits, texts, pictures, and other different elements that should sound harmonically, ICTs can help in arranging the visual, textual, and contextual elements by computer-based information of the colours, the graphic design, the fonts in the text etc.

Restoration and Conservation Work

The dating of exhibits, the origin proving, the checking of the material of the valuable etc are only one part of the ICTs usage from the restorers. The other sphere of information communications technologies usage is computer-based programmes and internet exchange of information about the potential vision of the found pieces/elements of the valuables. These programmes help in recognizing the objects and in finding potential options/techniques for reconstruction/rebuilding if it is necessary.

Information East Retrieval

The contemporary museum cannot be imagined without many technical and technological achievements. The use of information and communication technologies at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century became necessary not only for large museums, but also for quite small and even municipal ones. Information technologies help solve many, if not all issues that are traditional for museums.

Digital database facilitates museum registration and storage, help systematize and attach to every museum object the history of its acquisition, its use, and its circulation both within the museum and outside of it for exhibitions, all publications of the object, and all restoration work it undergoes.

Such concentration of information in turn facilitates research in museum collections, the complication of various lists, selections, and the preparation of catalogues and curatorial and restoration documents.

Information technology can help museums in the presentation of their collections. The form of the presentation can be quite different – from producing high-quality digital copies of fragile works (e.g, documents or graphic works), which can be displayed as part of permanent exhibitions, to creating virtual exhibition shows online and providing access to museum collections for remote users, and solving the issue of expanding the museum's audience through attracting internet users.

Many museums nowadays cannot imagine their exhibitions without multimedia elements, which have numerous functions, from being an explanation or substitutes for essential objects unavailable at the museum, to bringing the spectator into a certain emotional state, and involving them in interaction with the museum space and objects.

Research, ICTs in Museum Education

Education is one of the key activities of museums, together with keeping research and presentation of museum objects. Today, with the permanently growing information flow, society needs more than ever before to get targeted, verified, and comprehensible information. Museums, which have been accumulating civilization experiences of humankind for centuries, along with universities and scientific cum research institutions, represent valuable sources of such information. As a unique intermediary between the object of cultural codes, museums offer almost unlimited possibilities in the area of education.

Access to educational materials of all kinds has never been so easy or so open as it is today, and this trend is only increasing. The model of the museum curator or museum educator who stands in front of an object and interprets meaning for a passive audience is simply no longer realistic in this world of instant access. Museum professionals must respond by changing their roles to reflect the new needs to guide and coach visitors in finding, interpreting, and making their own connections with collections and ideas, for instance, the use of virtual archives for storing information for museum educational purposes.

In most cases, virtual archives provide online access to digitized data that can be used for certain educational/research tasks. Virtual archives are usually implemented as information repositories that can get queried by visitors through online search forms, but there are many that provide free access directly on the museum's webpage. The content of these online museum archives can include database of lectures and conferences, research books published, catalogues, collections etc. Some archives encourage users' contributions on the archives topic and allow their users to participate in the virtual archive. No matter how they are structured or accessed, they are useful tools and support for implementing different museum educational activities, e.g:

- To create a multimodal interactive environment for active adoption and research of museum values.
- To achieve a new quality of co-operation and interaction of museum educators and to enhance their professional development.
- ICTs generate additional attention to particular exhibitions.
- They form new algorithms of perception and understanding of the museum and its exhibitions.
- They help museum educators improve their pedagogical skills that were formed in the pre-computer era.

Usage of Mobile Technologies: QR Codes and Smart Objects

Museums around the world are now accessible on the web and through social media. Digital technologies have found their place in the modern museum in different forms.

Quick Response Code or QR Code is a type of two-dimensional barcode first designed in Japan's Denso Wave, a Toyota subsidiary, in 1994 for the purpose of automotive industry. The QR Code is similar to a barcode, but the difference is in the responsibility of reading it with mobile phones and a bigger capacity for storing data. The square-shaped black and white code can store various textual information and even binary data. To read the code, one needs a camera and software that can do the decoding, but QR codes can also be decoded by means of a computer equipped with a webcam.

The possibilities of mobile technology usage are numerous and vary depending on the effects that the museum wants to achieve. The aim is to use it to enhance the visitor experience and include visitors in the communication. This information could be presented in different ways:

(i) Interaction with and between visitors.
(ii) Research: coded links to the web can prove useful in researching public opinions.
(iii) Location awareness: The App can determine the location of the visitor and tailor the experience to that location, and lets visitors create custom tours.

Smart Objects

Smart objects are a category of small devices or methods that enable three things: first, they allow an object to be assigned a unique identifier; second, they are able to attach small bits of information, such as its age, shelf life, environmental data like temperature or humidity, and much more; third, they are able to communicate the status of that information on demand, whether optically or electromagnetic frequencies. They can also be used to digitally manage physical objects, monitor their status, track them throughout their lifespan, alert someone when they are in danger or being damaged or spoiled, or even to annotate them with descriptions, instructions, warranties, tutorials, photographs, connections to other objects, and any other kind of contextual information imaginable.

Museum Security

Inasmuch as museum look after the world's cultural properties and interpret it to the public, it would be of immense help to the newly created Antiquity Protection Unit to embrace information technology to provide appropriate security to protect museum collections against theft, natural or man-made disasters. Hence the aforementioned department is saddled with the responsibilities of providing front of house security and surveillance in the gallery, participate in investigation regarding loss and assist with resolution, monitor and report security, safety and fire incidents to the superior on duty and complete the required documentation, a bit of information technology like the use of a closed-circuit television (CCTV), metal detector, radio signals etc, should be applied to monitor both the exterior and interior parts of the gallery plus including objects kept in the museum store and improve the quality and access control system to detect and deter any potential danger that may affect the monument building and including the staff therein.

Innovation Process in Museum

ICTs serves to improve the museum's overall functioning ranging from exhibitions, keeping of staff records, accounts/audit reports, tracking of museums location in Nigeria, enabling visitors instant access to the different types of museums in the country, types of collections, tracking of monuments' location, nature and stage of development, restoration activities, visitors statistic etc.

Benefits of using ICT

i. **Communication with Audience**: One of the greatest benefits ascribed to technology adoption is that it helps institutions foster a connection with regular or potential visitors. It therefore creates a concrete communication channel with them, having as its main advantage, the possibility of getting effective feedback.
ii. **Accessibility, Publicity and Web Presence**: The usage of ICT allows more users to access the institutions' content, beyond geographical borders and physical limitations.
iii. **Attracting the Audience:** The usage of ICT plays a great role in increasing the recognisability of cultural heritage institutions.
iv. **Providing better services to staff and users**: ICT tools provide useful solutions for documentation, archiving and preservation, allowing institutions to adopt international standards in digitization and reinforce interoperability in the cultural heritage sector.
v. **Enhancing visitors' experience and satisfaction:** In direct relation to the above, the adoption of ICT creates big opportunities for museums to develop more engaging visitor experiences. Besides, technologies could support and enrich the object and as a result, supplement and revitalize the exhibition. The active, self-controlled and collaborative exploration of the digital contents indirectly benefits learning, especially in the case of complex, abstract or non-visible phenomena.

Problems/challenges in using ICT

- Most people experience problems with machines and new ICTs are no exception. Living and working with and around machines is not only a story of benefits, but also of problems, uncertainties, demands for change and conflicts.
- Lack of copyright procedure hampers the greatest ideas.
- Lack of interest in updating technology.
- Limited financial resources.
- Inadequate public-private partnership.

Solutions

At a time when more and more services in society are becoming digital, there is a need for everyone to be able to make use of the opportunities that are created. This relates, for example, to being able to use the internet and other digital services in everyday life as a citizen or employee.

- **Digital inclusion:** Everyone who wants to must be able to make use of the opportunities offered by digitization.
- **E-Services and information as a basis for innovative services:** Smarter and more open administration that supports innovation and participation.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the problems, digitization and information communication technology present a great opportunity for museums. It gives them the chance to open mobile and purely virtual museums alongside brick-and-wooden establishments. In actuality, mobile and internet services are not just a possibility, but a necessity.
Digital technologies have affected every aspect of our lives, also every industry, company and organization, including museums and galleries. Museums now have the ability to engage the visitor in many ways and have the opportunity to create a memorable, unique experience. Digital technologies can deliver large volumes and personalized information to target different learning styles and requirements, and this is what makes the technology so versatile and may lead to exciting new possibilities for museums in the future.

Recommendations

i. Cultural activities, collections and archives must be preserved digitally and made available to the public electronically to a greater extent. All central government institutions that collect and preserve

cultural heritage material and cultural heritage information and make it available are to have a plan for digitization and accessibility.

ii. Because of the facilities and experiences the museum provides, the Federal Government of Nigeria should support the commission with advanced technologies to place National Museums among other technologically advanced museums in the world.

iii. Training services serve two important aims. The first is to equip museum staff and volunteers with the skills they will need to use ICT effectively. The second is to ensure that people feel supported in using ICT, and not that it is simply being foisted on them.

iv. To be up-to-date and give visitors a memorable and unique experience, the museum should embrace the usage of digital technologies in their exhibitions.

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Crossing The Aisle: Politics Of Defection And Democracy In Southeastern Nigeria, 1999-2023

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Abstract
Like other parts of Nigeria, defection – referred herein as "crossing the aisle" – has been a recurring feature of political actors in the democratic dispensation of Southeastern Nigeria, shaping the political stability and undermining institutional consolidation in the geopolitical zone. This study thus examined the motives, patterns, and consequences of party defections among political actors in this region during the study period. It argued that the character of defection from one political party to another in the region was rarely driven by ideology; rather, it reflected personal ambition, elite power struggles, and patronage politics. Adopting a descriptive approach in historical research, the study explored landmark episodes, including the party defections that precipitated the collapse of the Peoples Democratic Party, and threatened to throw Fourth Republic into a one-party democratic dispensation. It highlighted the inadequacy of constitutional and institutional safeguards in regulating the practice, thereby enabling opportunistic alignments that weaken party cohesion and distort democratic competition. The paper contends that persistent defections have fuelled Southeastern Nigeria's broader democratic imbroglio, characterized by unstable governance, fragile legitimacy, and democratic stagnation. It concludes by emphasizing the need for reforms that strengthen party ideology, cement constitutional loopholes, and promote accountability, towards addressing one of the key obstacles to the region's democratic consolidation.
Keywords: Aisle, Crossing, Defections, Democracy, Southeastern Nigeria

Introduction

Party defection has been one of the most prominent features of the democratic experience in Southeastern Nigeria. Within the fourth republic, defections profoundly influenced the political process in the region, shaping the stability of political parties, determining electoral outcomes, and complicating its democratic consolidation. Unlike in advanced democracies, where defections were often rooted in ideological disagreements or principled objections to party policies, defections in this section of Nigeria, likewise other parts of the country, were predominantly motivated by personal ambition, elite bargaining, and access to patronage resources (Joseph, 1991; Nwankwo, 2015). As such, the politics of defection has become both a reflection of and a challenge to the functioning of democracy in the geopolitical zone.

Historically, the weakness of party institutionalization was deduced as a rationale behind the persistence of defections in Southeastern Nigeria. Most political parties lacked clear ideological foundations, programmatic commitments, or enduring organizational structures. Instead, they operated as platforms for elite contestation, regional bargaining, and patronage distribution (Ibrahim & Egwu, 2005). Internal democracy was often compromised, with candidate selection processes manipulated by party elites, resulting in disillusionment and exit by aggrieved members. In this context, defection is less a matter of principle and more a strategy for political survival and access to state power (Omotola, 2010).

This study interrogates the patterns and implications of defections across Southeastern Nigeria's democratic history. By assessing the dynamics of defections that had taken place within the study period, the study situates defections within the broader struggles of the region's democratization process. It asks: Why were defections persistent in Southeastern Nigeria in the fourth republic? How have defections shaped party politics, governance, and democratic consolidation in the region? And what did they reveal about the weaknesses of political institutions in the geopolitical zone? By critically engaging with these issues, the research contributes to ongoing debates on the nature of democracy in Nigeria in particular and Africa at large. It highlights how elite behaviour and weak institutional foundations hindered the consolidation of democratic governance in Southeastern Nigeria. Additionally, the study underscored the urgent need for structural and cultural reforms that will reduce opportunistic defections and strengthen the region's fragile democracy.

Conceptual Clarification

Defection

Within the realm of political science, defection refers to the act of abandoning one's loyalty to a political party, movement, or coalition in favour of another, usually for strategic, ideological, or personal reasons. It is a form of political realignment that reflects the fluidity of political affiliations, particularly in multiparty democracies. Although sometimes described as "party-switching", defection is not merely a technical transfer of allegiance; it embodies complex motivations and has significant implications for political stability, governance, and democratic consolidation.

The concept of defection is closely tied to the processes that accompany party politics. In theory, parties are expected to embody ideological orientations that attract members based on shared beliefs and policy preferences. However, in many developing democracies – Nigeria included - party defection is often less about ideology and more about personal ambition, access to patronage, and strategic positioning. Therefore, it becomes a rational choice for political actors seeking to survive, influence, or gain access to state resources. This reflects Joseph's (1991) argument on Nigeria's prebendal politics, where public office and party membership are treated as instruments for personal and communal gain.

Globally, defections have been observed in established democracies, though often governed by institutional frameworks that limit their frequency. For instance, in the United Kingdom and the United States, party-switching is relatively rare and usually tied to ideological disagreements. By contrast, in countries with weaker party systems, defections are frequent, leading to fragile coalitions and unstable governance. In Southeastern Nigeria, defections are normalized to the extent that they shape electoral outcomes and determine access to political power (Omilusi, 2016).

Defection also raises normative questions about loyalty, accountability, and the health of democratic systems. On one hand, it may be justified as an exercise of political freedom and realignment of values. On the other hand, frequent defections undermine the credibility of political parties, confuse the electorate, and erode trust in democratic processes. Voters may perceive defectors as opportunists rather than principled leaders, thereby widening the gap between citizens and political elites (Agbaje, 2017).

Legally, defection is subject to varying constitutional and institutional controls. In Nigeria, Section 68(1)(g) of the 1999 Constitution attempts to regulate defections by stipulating that legislators who switch parties must vacate their seats unless their original party is factionalized. However, the provision has been inconsistently applied, as courts often interpret "factionalization" broadly, enabling politicians to defect with little consequence (Suberu, 2007). This legal loophole entrenches defection as a persistent political strategy.

Lastly, defection as a concept embodies both individual agency and systemic weakness. While it can be understood as a rational act by politicians maximizing self-interest, its frequency and consequences in fragile democracies like Nigeria reflect deeper structural challenges – weak party institutionalization, prebendalism, and the dominance of patronage politics. Thus, defection is not merely a political choice but a phenomenon that shapes the course of democratic governance.

Theoretical Framework: Rational Choice Theory (RCT)

The Rational Choice Theory (RCT) provides a powerful lens for analysing the politics of defections or party defections in Southeastern Nigeria within the study period. Existing in the works of Downs (1957) and Olson (1965), the theory assumed that political actors are rational, self-interested individuals who make decisions by weighing costs and benefits to maximize personal or collective utility. Applied to the Southeastern Nigeria's democratic landscape cum architecture, RCT helps assist with the reason(s) why defection – often dismissed as opportunism – remained a consistent feature of the political system.

Akin to other parts of Nigeria, defections in the Southeastern region of Nigeria were rarely driven by ideology but by calculations of survival, access to patronage, and electoral advantage. For instance, the mass defections from the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to the All Progressives Congress (APC) in 2013 were understood as rational moves by politicians seeking to align with an emerging coalition that promised greater chances of electoral victory in 2015 (Omilusi, 2016).

RCT is relevant to this study because it not only explained the motivations behind party defections but also revealed their systemic implications for democracy in the region. While rational for individual politicians, defections (within the study period) undermined party institutionalization, eroded voter trust, and weakened democratic accountability (Agbaje, 2017). The case of the Southeast underscored the paradox of RCT: individual rationality often produced collective irrationality, where personal gains translated into systemic instability.

Thus, RCT provides both explanatory and diagnostic value for understanding defection politics in Southeastern Nigeria. It highlighted the centrality of self-interest in political behaviour while exposing the institutional weaknesses that allowed such behaviour to flourish.

Southeastern Nigeria: Glance at a Geo-Polity

Southeastern Nigeria, one of the six geopolitical zones of the country Nigeria, is composed of five states: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. The region is predominantly inhabited by the Igbo ethnic group, one of the three major ethnic nationalities in Nigeria, with a population known for its entrepreneurial spirit, resilience, and strong sense of identity. Alongside the Igbo, the Southeast was home to the Ibibio, Efik,

and Ijaw ethnic nationalities, prior to the British colonial administration, and these groups were believed to possess distinctive democratic systems of government during this period (Nwogbo & Ezike, 2022). Since the dawn of contemporary democratic dispensation in 1999, however, the Southeast has remained politically active, socially vibrant, and economically significant, yet its democratic experience is shaped by historical grievances, structural challenges, and the persistent character of political fraud usually exhibited by political actors in the region.

The region's modern political history is deeply influenced by the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970), often referred to as the Biafra War. The attempt by the Eastern Region, led by Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, to secede as the Republic of Biafra ended in defeat, leaving a legacy of mistrust, marginalization, and feelings of exclusion from mainstream Nigerian politics. Post-war reconstruction policies, coupled with perceived neglect in federal appointments and infrastructure, deepened the people's sense of political alienation. These historical experiences continue to shape the region's relationship with the Nigerian state and its perceptions of democracy (Nwogbo & Ezike, 2022).

The Southeast is densely populated, with major urban centres such as Enugu, Onitsha, Aba, Owerri, and Abakaliki serving as commercial and cultural hubs. The Igbo people who dominate the region were known for their republican values, which emphasized equality, consultation, and communal decision-making. This cultural inclination towards participatory governance contrasts sharply with the authoritarian tendencies often witnessed in Nigeria's political practice, thereby heightening frustrations when democratic institutions fail to deliver.

Economically, the Southeast is reputed for its vibrant informal sector, particularly in trade, manufacturing, and services. Onitsha and Aba, for instance, are renowned as centres of commerce and small-scale industrial activities. The region is also rich in natural resources, including crude oil and natural gas in Abia and Imo, and solid minerals in Ebonyi. Despite this potential, inadequate infrastructure, poor governance, and limited federal investment have adversely affected economic growth. Many residents argue that the region has not received equitable developmental attention compared to other parts of Nigeria, reinforcing feelings of neglect and exclusion.

Factors Responsible for Politics of Defection in Southeastern Nigeria, 1999-2023

In the Fourth Republic, defections assumed alarming proportions, shaping the dynamics of party competition, governance, and democratic consolidation. Scholars and analysts argued that defections in Nigeria are driven by a mix of structural, institutional, and personal factors (Omilusi, 2019; Okorie & Ajaegbu, 2020).

Absence of strong ideological foundations in political parties constitutes one of the most significant factors responsible for defections in Southeastern Nigeria. Unlike in advanced democratic climes where parties are anchored on clear ideological lines – such as conservatism, liberalism, or socialism – political parties in the region largely operated as platforms for electoral victory rather than vehicles of policy or ideological conviction (Omilusi, 2019). This fluidity allowed politicians to switch parties easily when their ambitions or interests were threatened, without facing ideological contradictions. The ideological shallowness of parties, therefore, creates fertile ground for opportunistic defections.

Personal ambition and the quest for political survival often drove defections. Many politicians defected when denied party tickets during primaries or when their chances of electoral victory within their current party appeared slim (Oji, 2021). Defections often spiked during pre-election periods, as aspirants moved to rival parties where they believed they have greater chances of actualizing their ambitions. This reflected the primacy of personal interest over party loyalty in Nigeria's political culture.

Factionalism and internal crises within parties also contributed to defections. Some parties were plagued by leadership struggles, imposition of candidates, and weak internal democracy (Aleyomi & Ojo, 2014). When there were struggles over the candidate to emerge as a party's flagbearer in an impending election, aggrieved members often defected to other platforms. For example, the crisis within the All Progressives Congress in Imo State over the right candidate to fly the party's flag for the 2019 gubernatorial election in the State, compelled the majority of political loyalists to His Excellency, Owelle Richas Anayo Okorocha, the then sitting governor of the State, to defect to the Action Alliance (AA), towards ensuring that the governor's anointed candidate emerged as his successor (Ubaku, 2019; Nwogbo & Ezike, 2022). There were also personal calculations of achieving some political gains.

Another critical factor is the dominance of patronage and rent-seeking in Nigeria's political system. Political parties were considered gateways to state resources and privileges. Politicians frequently defected to ruling parties to access federal or state patronage, including contracts, appointments, and protection from anti-

corruption agencies (Ogundiya, 2011). The pervasive culture of clientelism means that loyalty was often to personal benefits rather than to party principles.

The weak enforcement of constitutional provisions also fueled defections. Although the 1999 Constitution (Section 68(1)(g)) stipulated that legislators who defected without just cause should lose their seats, this rule was inadequately enforced (Yagboyaju & Akinola, 2019). The judiciary often gave contradictory interpretations of "justifiable divisions" within parties, providing legal cover for rampant defections. This institutional weakness made defection an almost cost-free strategy for politicians.

Party defections were often driven by electoral strategy. Politicians defected to align with parties perceived as having greater chances of winning upcoming elections. This trend was particularly evident during presidential election cycles, when local politicians switched allegiance to national parties with strong momentum (Okorie & Ajaegbu, 2020). Such strategic alignments were less about ideology and more about maximizing political survival.

The pervasive influence of political godfathers and elite networks also drove defections. When falling out with political sponsors or power brokers, many politicians defected to alternative parties where they can secure new alliances (Albert, 2017). Godfatherism thus undermined party cohesion, as loyalty to patrons often superseded loyalty to parties.

Party Defections and Democratic Governance in Southeastern Nigeria: Analysis of Implications, 1999-2023

As earlier divulged, defections have become a dominant feature of Nigeria's democratic practice. While defections occur globally, their frequency, motivations, and consequences in Southeastern Nigeria revealed deeper systemic and institutional weaknesses in the region's democracy.

Under democratic processes in Southeastern Nigeria, defections shaped electoral outcomes, altered parliamentary majorities, redefined power alignments, and weakened opposition structures. The phenomenon was so normalized that no electoral cycle passed without mass defections, especially in the build-up to general elections. Although some politicians justified defections as responses to internal party crises or lack of ideological direction, they are more often motivated by political survival, access to state resources, and elite bargaining (Okorie & Ajaegbu, 2020).

One of the most damaging effects of party defections has been the weakening of political party institutionalization. Strong parties in consolidated democracies are expected to serve as vehicles for ideology, policy articulation, and representation (Diamond, 1999). In Southeastern Nigeria, however, parties functioned largely as platforms for winning elections and distributing patronage. Frequent defections eroded party cohesion and reinforced the perception that parties were temporary vehicles for personal ambition. This lack of stability prevented the development of enduring party systems and undermined the consolidation of democracy in the region (Agbaje, 2017).

Party defections compromised the sanctity of electoral mandates. When politicians elected under the platform of one party defected to another without seeking fresh elections, they betrayed the trust of voters who supported them based on party affiliation. For example, when governors or legislators defect immediately after winning elections, the people's mandate is effectively transferred to a new party that was not chosen by the electorate. This undermined democratic accountability, as citizens lost confidence in the electoral process. The lack of consequences for defectors – despite constitutional provisions in Section 68(1)(g) of the 1999 Constitution – exacerbates the problem (Suberu, 2007).

Party defections often produced instability in governance and policy implementation. When politicians switched allegiances, new coalitions emerged, leading to policy reversals and discontinuities. State-level defections by governors frequently resulted in cabinet reshuffles, purges of civil servants, and redirection of state resources to align with new political loyalties (Ubaku, 2017). Such disruptions hindered long-term development planning and governance effectiveness. Instead of focusing on service delivery, leaders prioritized political survival and patronage distribution (Omilusi, 2019).

Opposition parties are vital for democratic checks and balances. However, party defections within the study period often decimated opposition strength, as many politicians defected to ruling parties to enjoy access to state resources. The bandwagon effect – where politicians switch to ruling parties after electoral victories – eroded opposition viability and reduced competitiveness in elections. For instance, after APC's victory in 2015, most PDP and APGA (All Progressive Grand Alliance) members defected to APC, weakening the opposition's capacity to challenge government actions. This weak opposition undermined accountability, allowing ruling parties to dominate with little scrutiny (Okorie & Ajaegbu, 2020).

Party defections reinforced prebendal political culture in Southeastern Nigeria, where public office is viewed as an avenue for dispensing patronage to loyalists (Joseph, 1991). Politicians defected to ruling parties to access federal or state patronage networks, particularly in the distribution of contracts, appointments, and federal allocations. This patronage-driven system diverted attention from governance and development to rent-seeking and elite bargaining. The result was a political culture that prioritized personal gains over public interest, thereby undermining democratic governance.

The frequency of defections contributed to widespread cynicism about democracy in Southeastern Nigeria. The populace perceived politicians as opportunistic actors lacking loyalty, principle, or ideological conviction. Such disillusionment reduced voter turnout, weakened civic participation, and delegitimized democratic institutions.

The implications of defections for democratic governance in Southeastern Nigeria extended beyond immediate political instability. They affected broader processes of democratization and state legitimacy. Obviously, party defections brought about institutional fragility, highlighting the weakness of political institutions and thereby making democracy vulnerable to elite manipulation. It equally promoted elite-centred democracy in the region by making democratic governance in Southeastern Nigeria increasingly elite-driven, having served as a haven for renegotiating elite bargains rather than advancing the interests of the populace. Party defections, furthermore, had serious implications for societal cohesion. Often, it exacerbated group tensions as politicians justified switches in terms of sectional advantage. This undermined efforts to build inclusive governance and unity.

Party defections have become a recurring feature of democratic experience in Southeastern Nigeria, shaping electoral outcomes and altering patterns of governance. While defections may be rational strategies for individual politicians, their cumulative effects undermine democratic governance. They weakened party institutionalization, distorted electoral mandates, eroded opposition politics, disrupted policy continuity, entrenched patronage, and diminished the people's trust in democracy.

Conclusion

This study has revealed that political defection has become both a symptom and a driver of democratic instability in Southeastern Nigeria. Since the advent of the Fourth Republic in 1999, Southeastern Nigeria has witnessed incessant movements of politicians from one political party to another, driven more by personal ambition, elite competition, and access to state resources than by ideological conviction or commitment to public service. This trend reflects broader systemic weaknesses in the region's democratic process, including fragile party structures, the absence of internal democracy, and the dominance of patronage politics.

For the Southeastern region of Nigeria to achieve democratic consolidation, however, systemic reforms must address the structural and institutional weaknesses that made defections so pervasive. Strengthening political parties, reforming constitutional frameworks, and fostering a political culture rooted in ideology and accountability are critical steps. Without such reforms, defections will continue to destabilize the region's democracy and undermine the prospects of good governance.

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Religious Tolerance And Peaceful Co-Existence In Northern Nigeria: Challenges And Pathways To Peace

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Abstract
Religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence remain central to sustainable development and social stability in Northern Nigeria, a region characterized by centuries of interaction between Muslim and Christian communities. Despite this history of interdependence, the region continues to experience interreligious tensions, violent extremism, and identity-based conflicts that undermine community trust, disrupt livelihoods, and weaken developmental progress. Drawing on recent scholarly insights, this article examines the historical and contemporary roots of religious conflict, including structural inequalities, political manipulation of identity, radicalization, and weak governance systems. It further analyzes the multifaceted roles of government institutions, religious leaders, interfaith dialogue platforms, and community actors, particularly women and youth, in promoting peace. Using the case of Agaie Local Government Area in Niger State, the study highlights how grassroots initiatives such as community peace committees, women-led mediation networks, and interfaith agricultural cooperatives have contributed to reduced violence and improved intergroup relations. The article is anchored on Conflict Transformation Theory and Social Identity Theory, offering a theoretical lens for understanding and addressing religious conflict in the region. Key challenges identified include entrenched stereotypes, socio-economic inequalities, proliferation of small arms, misinformation, and inconsistent government action. The study recommends strengthening peace education, enhancing community policing, expanding interfaith programs, supporting women's participation, and institutionalizing early-warning mechanisms. Overall, the findings underscore that although religious conflict in Northern Nigeria is complex and multifaceted, intentional and inclusive peace building strategies can significantly enhance tolerance, rebuild trust, and foster long-term peaceful coexistence.
Keywords: Religious tolerance, peaceful coexistence, interfaith relations, Northern Nigeria.

Introduction

Northern Nigeria is historically home to diverse religious communities, predominantly Muslims and Christians, whose coexistence has shaped the region's socio-cultural and political life for centuries. Interreligious interactions, manifested through shared markets, traditional institutions, intergroup festivals, and longstanding trade networks, have contributed to a history of cooperation and mutual dependence (Shehu, 2024). However, despite this rich legacy of coexistence, the region continues to experience periodic outbreaks of interreligious tension, violent extremism, and identity-based conflict. These episodes range from localized communal disputes to large-scale crises linked to extremist groups such as Boko Haram and ISWAP, whose activities have widened existing religious and ethnic fault lines[10]. Such conflicts undermine social cohesion by eroding trust, limiting social mobility, and deepening suspicion between communities. They also disrupt livelihoods through the destruction of property, displacement of families, and restricted access to markets, farmlands, and schools, thereby weakening development prospects across affected states.

Contemporary research increasingly shows that these tensions are driven by multidimensional factors. Structural inequalities such as poverty, youth unemployment, unequal access to political power, and competition over land and water resources have created conditions that make communities vulnerable to conflict triggers (Ibrahim, 2023). Political actors sometimes exploit these vulnerabilities by manipulating religious and ethnic identities to achieve electoral advantage, further entrenching divisive narratives. Additionally, extremist ideologies continue to gain traction among marginalized youth, with radical groups capitalizing on grievances rooted in injustice, poor governance, and social exclusion (Ibrahim, 2023). These dynamics combine to strain community relations, amplifying stereotypes and heightening mistrust.

Yet, despite these challenges, evidence from recent peace-building interventions across Northern Nigeria demonstrates that targeted and inclusive engagement can significantly enhance intergroup trust and rebuild fractured relationships. Initiatives such as community-level mediation forums, youth interfaith dialogues, joint economic cooperatives, and women-led peace networks have shown measurable success in reducing tensions and improving cooperation between Christian and Muslim communities (Badaru, 2023). This growing body of evidence suggests that when peace-building efforts are context-sensitive, community-driven, and supported by local institutions, they have the potential to transform conflict dynamics and strengthen the foundations for sustainable coexistence.

The Roots of Religious Conflict and Violence

Religious conflict in Northern Nigeria is rooted in interconnected historical, socio-economic, and political factors that continue to shape intergroup relations across the region. These drivers interact in complex ways, turning everyday disputes into identity-based confrontations.

1. **Colonial legacies and identity formation:** The colonial administrative system not only introduced indirect rule but also institutionalized religious identities as markers of political and social belonging. By distinguishing between Muslim emirate structures in the North and Christian missionary zones elsewhere, colonial authorities reinforced divisions that later evolved into competing political blocs after independence. These institutionalized identities laid the foundation for contestations over leadership, resource access, and territorial control (Yakubu, 2021).
2. **Economic deprivation and land-use pressures:** Widespread poverty, declining agricultural productivity, and limited livelihood opportunities have heightened tensions between groups competing for scarce resources. In the Middle Belt and parts of Northwest Nigeria, shrinking arable land and desert encroachment have intensified farmer–herder conflicts. These conflicts, though fundamentally economic, are frequently framed in religious terms because the majority of settled farmers are Christian and many pastoralist groups are predominantly Muslim (Danladi, 2022). This religious framing often transforms economic disputes into broader communal confrontations.
3. **Radicalization and extremist ideologies:** Violent extremist organizations such as Boko Haram and ISWAP capitalize on socio-economic grievances, feelings of marginalization, and governance failures to recruit followers. Through selective interpretations of religious texts, these groups manipulate vulnerable communities and reinforce dangerous narratives that portray religious "others" as enemies. Their operations have displaced millions, destroyed interfaith social networks, and created deep psychological trauma that further erodes trust between religious groups (Umar, 2023).
4. **Political instrumentalization of religion:** In some instances, political elites deliberately invoke religious identity to mobilize supporters, win elections, or silence opposition. Such manipulation fosters suspicion, polarizes communities, and distorts religious teachings for political gain. During election cycles, inflammatory rhetoric and rumor-mongering often exacerbate tensions, contributing to cycles of fear and hostility between Christian and Muslim communities.
5. **Weak governance structures:** Persistent weaknesses in governance, especially inadequate policing, insufficient conflict mediation mechanisms, and slow or selective justice delivery, create conditions where minor disagreements can escalate into violent clashes. The absence of strong early-warning and early-response systems means that local disputes often go unaddressed until they spiral into broader communal violence. Corruption and lack of accountability further reduce public trust in state institutions, compelling communities to rely on self-help strategies that sometimes fuel vigilantism.

Recent reports note that despite ongoing peacebuilding efforts by governments, traditional rulers, civil society organizations, and interfaith councils, intercommunal violence persists across parts of Northern Nigeria. This violence manifests in targeted attacks on religious leaders, reprisal killings, rural banditry, destruction of worship centers, and localized clashes that disrupt education, displace households, and weaken economic activities (Shehu, 2024). The persistence of these incidents underscores the complexity of religious conflict in the region and the need for more holistic, inclusive, and sustained peacebuilding approaches.

The Role of Government in Peacebuilding

Government institutions play a critical role in strengthening religious tolerance:

1. **Policy interventions:** Federal and state governments have developed peacebuilding frameworks, such as the National Peace Policy and state peace commissions. When effectively implemented, these provide platforms for early warning and conflict mediation (Ojo, 2020).
2. **Security sector reforms:** Improved policing, community policing models, and intelligence-sharing mechanisms have helped de-escalate tensions in places like Kaduna and Plateau States.
3. **Inclusive governance:** Ensuring equitable representation of religious groups in political appointments builds trust and signals fairness.
4. **Education reforms:** Integrating peace education, civic values, and interfaith understanding into school curricula promotes long-term tolerance among young people.
5. **Regulation of hate speech and social media misuse:** Recent efforts by state governments to curb inflammatory sermons and online incitement have reduced triggers of violence.

However, implementation gaps, corruption, and inconsistent government action continue to weaken trust in state-led peace initiatives.

The Role of Religious Leaders in Peace-building

Religious leaders command significant influence across local communities, making their involvement indispensable in promoting peace and mitigating conflict in Northern Nigeria. Their moral authority, spiritual legitimacy, and access to grassroots networks position them as frontline actors in peace-building.

1. **Preventing violence:** Clerics frequently intervene during moments of heightened tension, using sermons, public announcements, and community meetings to discourage revenge attacks. Their early mediation efforts often help de-escalate local disputes before they spread across communities.
2. **Promoting dialogue:** In conflict-prone states such as Jos, Kaduna, and Yobe, Christian and Muslim leaders have spearheaded joint peace committees that facilitate dialogue forums, mediate disputes, and encourage consistent communication between communities (Tanko, 2022). These committees have been credited with improving trust and reducing the likelihood of sectarian reprisals.
3. **Countering extremist narratives:** Religious leaders also play a critical role in challenging extremist propaganda. By offering credible and contextually grounded interpretations of religious texts, they weaken the appeal of violent ideologies and reassert the teachings of compassion, justice, and peaceful coexistence. Their voices are particularly influential among youth at risk of radicalization.
4. **Community mobilization:** Through established bodies such as the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI), the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), and various interfaith councils, religious leaders mobilize congregations for peace marches, town hall meetings, and community sensitization programs. These platforms help diffuse tensions, strengthen interfaith cooperation, and foster a culture of nonviolence at the grassroots level.

Interfaith Dialogue Initiatives and Their Impact

Interfaith dialogue initiatives have proven effective in bridging divides and fostering genuine cooperation among religious communities in Northern Nigeria. These platforms create safe spaces for open conversation, shared problem-solving, and joint community action.

• **Kaduna Interfaith Mediation Centre:** The Centre has facilitated thousands of community-level interventions, including mediation sessions, peace education workshops, and rapid-response dialogues. These efforts have contributed to noticeable reductions in retaliatory violence in several high-risk communities, particularly during election seasons and after localized clashes (Okonkwo, 2021).

• **Women interfaith peace networks:** In Plateau and Gombe States, women-led interfaith groups have strengthened early warning and early-response systems by monitoring tensions, identifying potential triggers, and reporting suspicious activities to local authorities. Their involvement has increased the speed and effectiveness of conflict prevention efforts.

• **Youth interfaith sports programs:** Football tournaments, cultural festivals, and joint volunteer activities in Kano and Niger States have successfully brought young people from Christian and Muslim backgrounds together. These initiatives promote friendship, challenge stereotypes, and reduce the likelihood of youth recruitment into violent groups.

Impact studies consistently show that such interfaith initiatives lead to improved interpersonal trust, increased willingness to collaborate on community projects, and significant reductions in rumor-driven violence that often fuels communal clashes (Badaru, 2023).

Empowering Women and Youth as Peacebuilders

Women and youth are often the most affected by conflict but remain underrepresented in formal peace processes.

Women as Peace-builders

Women and youth are often the most affected by conflict yet remain significantly underrepresented in formal peace processes across Northern Nigeria. Despite this marginalization, both groups play indispensable roles in fostering community resilience, preventing violence, and sustaining long-term peace. Women contribute to peacebuilding in multiple, often under-recognized ways:

• **Mediators within families and extended communities:** Women frequently intervene during domestic or neighborhood disputes, helping de-escalate tensions before they escalate into broader communal conflict. Their relational networks give them unique access to households and informal spaces where early signs of unrest often emerge.

• **Leaders of interfaith mothers' associations:** In states like Plateau, Kaduna, and Gombe, interfaith mothers' groups bring Christian and Muslim women together to discuss community challenges, advocate for peace, and

jointly monitor early-warning signals. Their collaboration demonstrates how maternal solidarity can transcend religious boundaries.

• **Advocates for trauma healing and reconciliation:** Women play key roles in psychosocial support, including counseling survivors of violence, organizing healing circles, and promoting reconciliation initiatives. Their efforts are crucial in rebuilding trust after communal clashes.

• **Organizers of livelihood programs for displaced families:** By training widows, IDPs, and vulnerable households in income-generating skills, such as tailoring, food processing, and small-scale trading, women help reduce economic desperation, a major driver of conflict recruitment. Research indicates that communities with active women's peace networks recover faster from conflict due to stronger communication channels, improved social cohesion, and more effective early-warning systems (Hassan, 2022).

Youth as Peace-builders

Young people shape social interactions, digital communication, and community perceptions, making them central actors in peace-building:

• **Civic education:** Youth-led civic education initiatives improve political awareness, reduce susceptibility to manipulation by elites, and encourage nonviolent participation in community affairs.

• **Entrepreneurship:** Skills acquisition and business incubation programs empower young people economically, reducing their vulnerability to recruitment by violent groups or extremist networks.

• **Interfaith volunteerism:** Joint volunteer projects, such as environmental cleanups, community security watch programs, and humanitarian support for displaced households, help young people build friendships across religious divides and foster a shared sense of responsibility.

• **Peace clubs in schools:** Peace clubs promote tolerance, conflict-resolution skills, and interfaith dialogue among students. They also counteract harmful stereotypes and provide young people with alternatives to violence. Evidence from multiple youth-focused interventions suggests that when young people are given structured opportunities for leadership, collaboration, and economic empowerment, rates of violent participation drop and intercommunity relations improve significantly (Abdullahi, 2023).

Community-Level Peacebuilding: Case Study of Agaie LGA, Niger State

Agaie Local Government Area offers a powerful illustration of how grassroots initiatives can foster sustainable peace and social cohesion. In the community, peacebuilding efforts were driven by inclusive structures that involved religious, traditional, and community-based actors. One of the central strategies was the establishment of Community Peace Committees, where Imams, pastors, and traditional rulers worked collectively to address emerging tensions and resolve disputes before they escalated into violence. This collaborative mechanism helped strengthen communication channels and build mutual trust among diverse groups.

Another major contributor to harmony in the area was the implementation of joint community projects. Youth from both Christian and Muslim backgrounds came together to participate in activities such as road repairs, water supply enhancement, and market sanitation exercises. These shared responsibilities not only improved community infrastructure but also nurtured a sense of collective ownership and belonging among participants.

Agriculture, being a major livelihood in Agaie, also became a platform for interfaith cooperation. Interfaith agricultural cooperatives were formed to manage resources such as grazing land and water points. Through these cooperatives, farmers and herders from different religious groups jointly coordinated grazing schedules and shared access to water, significantly reducing conflicts that previously stemmed from resource competition.

Women, too, played a crucial role in peacebuilding in Agaie. Christian and Muslim women formed mediation groups that intervened in domestic issues, youth quarrels, and market-related disagreements. Their involvement not only contributed to conflict reduction but also enhanced women's visibility and influence in community governance.

The cumulative impact of these initiatives has been profound. A 2023 study conducted by local researchers documented a notable decline in communal violence, increased intergroup trust, and greater economic collaboration across religious divides (Abdulmalik, 2023). The experience of Agaie demonstrates that when peacebuilding efforts are localized, participatory, and sustained, they can produce measurable and long-lasting outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on two key theories:

Conflict Transformation Theory (Lederach, 1995)

The first is Conflict Transformation Theory, advanced by Lederach (1995), which argues that sustainable peace requires more than simply ending violence; it demands addressing the underlying social structures, power imbalances, and broken relationships that sustain conflict. This theory provides an essential lens for understanding the complex dynamics in Northern Nigeria, where longstanding grievances, unequal resource distribution, weak governance, and fractured community relations continually fuel religious tensions. By emphasizing inclusiveness, dialogue, and community empowerment, Conflict Transformation Theory directly aligns with the grassroots peacebuilding strategies discussed in this study, such as community peace committees, interfaith cooperatives, and women-led mediation groups. These initiatives do more than resolve disputes; they transform relationships, rebuild trust, and create new social arrangements that make peace more resilient.

Social Identity Theory

The second theoretical anchor is Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which explains how individuals derive part of their self-concept from group memberships and how these identities shape intergroup behavior. In Northern Nigeria, religious identity, whether Muslim or Christian often forms the most salient marker of belonging, and this can easily translate into in-group favoritism and out-group suspicion. Social Identity Theory helps illuminate why minor disputes can quickly escalate along religious lines and why stereotypes, prejudice, and collective memory of past violence continue to influence interactions between groups. The theory highlights the psychological dimension of conflict, showing that peacebuilding must not only address material and structural issues but also challenge rigid identity boundaries and reduce the emotional distance between communities.

Together, these theories provide a robust foundation for analyzing the challenges and peacebuilding efforts in Northern Nigeria. Conflict Transformation Theory explains how peace can be built through inclusive dialogue, structural change, and long-term community engagement, while Social Identity Theory explains why such efforts are needed, given the deep-rooted identity-based divisions that shape intergroup relations. When applied to case examples such as the Agaie Local Government Area, both theories illuminate how targeted initiatives, like joint youth projects, interfaith agricultural cooperatives, and women's mediation groups, can gradually reshape identity perceptions, weaken stereotypes, and transform conflict-prone structures. Thus, the integration of these theoretical frameworks strengthens the article's analysis and underscores the importance of both psychological and structural approaches to promoting religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence in Northern Nigeria.

Challenges to Religious Tolerance and Peaceful Coexistence

Despite numerous peacebuilding initiatives, Northern Nigeria continues to face a range of complex challenges that undermine religious tolerance and the prospects for lasting peace. These challenges are multidimensional, encompassing social, economic, political, and security factors:

1. **Entrenched stereotypes and prejudice:** Historical narratives, past conflicts, and communal memories have created deep-seated stereotypes about "the other" religion. These biases influence perceptions, behavior, and decision-making, making it difficult for communities to trust one another or collaborate on shared projects. Even minor disputes can escalate quickly due to these preconceived notions.
2. **Socio-economic inequality and youth unemployment:** Widespread poverty, limited access to education, and high levels of unemployment, particularly among youth, exacerbate frustration and vulnerability to manipulation. Unemployed and marginalized young people are more likely to be recruited into extremist groups or to participate in intercommunal violence, turning economic grievances into religiously framed conflicts.
3. **Proliferation of small arms and rural banditry:** The availability of firearms, coupled with rising banditry in rural areas, increases the lethality of conflicts. Farmer–herder clashes, kidnappings, and attacks on religious leaders are often facilitated by unregulated weapons, making local disputes far deadlier than they would otherwise be.
4. **Instrumentalization of religion by political elites:** Politicians sometimes exploit religious identities to secure votes, manipulate communities, or consolidate power. This instrumentalization intensifies intergroup divisions, creates mistrust, and can provoke cycles of retaliatory violence, especially during election periods or political crises.

5. **Ineffective justice systems and delayed prosecution of offenders:** Weak law enforcement, delayed court proceedings, and selective application of justice discourage communities from relying on formal mechanisms to resolve disputes. When perpetrators are not held accountable, communities may resort to self-help measures, further perpetuating cycles of violence.
6. **Spread of misinformation via social media:** False rumors, inflammatory posts, and doctored images on social media often trigger fear and anger between religious groups. Misinformation can mobilize youth for violent action, escalate tensions, and undermine ongoing peacebuilding efforts.
7. **Weak community–government trust:** Historical neglect, unfulfilled promises, and inadequate security responses have eroded confidence in government institutions. Communities often feel that authorities are unable or unwilling to protect them, which discourages collaboration with formal peace initiatives.
8. **Limited funding for local peacebuilding initiatives:** Many community-based peace projects are constrained by insufficient resources. Lack of funding limits the reach, sustainability, and impact of programs such as youth empowerment, women's mediation networks, and interfaith dialogue forums, making it difficult to maintain momentum in peacebuilding efforts.

These challenges demonstrate that while progress has been made, addressing religious conflict in Northern Nigeria requires coordinated interventions that target structural inequalities, social perceptions, security deficits, and governance shortcomings simultaneously.

Conclusion

Religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence remain fundamental pillars for sustainable development, social stability, and economic growth in Northern Nigeria. The persistence of intercommunal violence, ideological radicalization, and socio-economic pressures poses serious threats to education, livelihoods, and community cohesion. Yet, mounting evidence shows that deliberate, well-structured interventions can effectively transform conflict dynamics and foster resilience. Initiatives such as interfaith dialogue, which bring together religious leaders and communities to foster understanding, have demonstrated significant reductions in mistrust and rumor-driven violence. Similarly, proactive government leadership that emphasizes inclusive governance, accountability, and equitable resource distribution helps mitigate the political and structural drivers of conflict.

Empowering youth and women further strengthens these efforts by leveraging the social influence, creativity, and organizational capacities of these groups. Grassroots peacebuilding, through community peace committees, joint projects, mediation groups, and interfaith cooperatives, has shown that local participation is critical for sustaining long-term harmony. When communities are actively engaged, conflicts are addressed early, relationships are rebuilt, and social networks are strengthened, creating a foundation for collective resilience.

Ultimately, achieving lasting peace in Northern Nigeria requires a multidimensional approach that integrates structural reforms, community empowerment, and inclusive dialogue. Strengthening institutional capacities, fostering social cohesion, and promoting shared economic opportunities not only reduce the likelihood of violent conflict but also create a climate in which tolerance, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence can flourish across generations.

Recommendations for Strengthening Religious Tolerance and Peaceful Coexistence

Based on the analysis of challenges, case studies, and theoretical insights, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance religious tolerance and sustainable peace in Northern Nigeria:

1. Governments, religious councils, and civil society organizations should expand and institutionalize interfaith dialogue programs at local, state, and regional levels. Regular forums that include religious leaders, youth, women, and community representatives can foster mutual understanding, build trust, and preempt conflict escalation.
2. Women and young people should be formally included in decision-making processes at both community and policy levels. Support for women-led mediation networks, youth peace clubs, and interfaith volunteer initiatives can harness the social capital and creative energies of these groups to prevent conflict and strengthen resilience.
3. Educational curricula at schools and community learning centers should include modules on tolerance, conflict resolution, and interfaith cooperation. Civic education can help youth recognize the dangers of stereotyping, extremism, and rumor propagation, while reinforcing a shared sense of national and community identity.

4. Targeted programs to reduce poverty, create employment, and expand access to education are critical for mitigating conflict triggers. For example, interfaith livelihood projects, vocational training, and cooperative economic ventures can reduce competition over scarce resources and promote shared interests between communities.
5. Effective policing, timely prosecution of offenders, and the establishment of functional early-warning systems are essential for deterring violence. Transparent and accountable governance helps rebuild trust between communities and state institutions, reducing reliance on self-help mechanisms that can escalate conflicts.

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Classroom Management Techniques And Their Effects On Students' Academic Performance In The Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract
This study investigated the effect of classroom management techniques on students' academic performance in government secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria. The study was guided by three objectives and three corresponding research questions, which sought to: identify the classroom management techniques commonly employed by teachers, examine the relationship between these techniques and students' academic performance, and assess the effect of selected strategies on student achievement. A *descriptive survey research design* was adopted. The population comprised all Junior Secondary School Two (JSS 2) students in government-owned secondary schools within the FCT. Using purposive sampling, five schools were selected, from which a total sample of *120 students* was drawn. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire that measured students' perceptions of classroom management practices, alongside academic performance scores obtained from school records. Analytical procedures included descriptive statistics for summarizing responses, *Pearson Product-Moment Correlation* for assessing relationships, and *One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)* for determining significant differences in performance levels across management categories. Findings revealed that preventive and supportive classroom management strategies—such as clear rule-setting, student engagement, time management and feedback—were the most frequently employed. A statistically significant positive correlation was found between classroom management practices and academic performance ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$). ANOVA results also indicated significant differences in academic achievement based on perceived classroom management effectiveness ($F = 51.92$, $p < 0.001$).The study concluded that effective classroom management is a critical determinant of student academic success in public secondary schools. It recommends the institutionalization of structured classroom management training within teacher education programmes, as well as continuous professional development and administrative support for teachers to ensure consistent implementation of effective strategies across schools in the FCT.
Keywords: Classroom activities, management, classroom techniques, academic performance, and students' attitudes

Introduction

Education remains a central pillar for national development, and the effectiveness of its delivery is closely linked to the quality of teaching and the conditions under which learning occurs. Within the classroom context, teachers are expected to create environments that are orderly, inclusive, and conducive to academic engagement. The ability to achieve this hinges on the deployment of effective classroom management techniques, a construct that refers to the composite strategies, routines, and interactions used by teachers to establish a functional learning environment and to influence positive student behaviour (Emmer & Evertson, 2021). Classroom management is a foundational element of effective teaching and learning. Without it, even the most well-planned lessons and curriculum content may fail to deliver intended outcomes. Effective classroom management ensures that instructional time is maximized, learner engagement is maintained, and a safe, orderly environment is established where all students have equal opportunities to succeed (Abdullahi, 2022). It involves a deliberate set of practices by which the teacher organizes students, resources, time, and space to achieve optimal learning conditions.

Research in educational psychology consistently affirms that when classrooms are well-managed, students demonstrate higher levels of academic achievement, self-discipline, and motivation (Adedigba & Sulaiman, 2020). Conversely, poorly managed classrooms are often characterized by disruption, lack of focus, reduced teacher efficacy, and low student performance. Therefore, effective classroom management is not merely a

discipline strategy—it is a professional competence that underpins all successful teaching and learning experiences. To achieve this, teachers use a range of classroom management techniques, often informed by their training, experience, and the unique needs of their learners. These techniques may be preventive (i.e., establishing rules, routines, and expectations), supportive (e.g., using reinforcement, praise, and redirection), or corrective (e.g., addressing misbehaviour through consequences) (Chukwuma, 2021). Common strategies include:

Clear rules and expectations: Teachers define acceptable behaviours at the beginning of the term and revisit them periodically; Seating arrangements: Strategic positioning of learners to minimize distractions and support cooperative learning; Time management: Starting and ending lessons on time, allocating tasks appropriately, and maintaining momentum; Behavioural reinforcement: Use of rewards, positive feedback, or token systems to encourage desired behaviour; Consequences and discipline: Logical and consistent responses to rule-breaking to maintain classroom order. In contemporary educational theory, emphasis is increasingly placed on positive and learner-centred management approaches, which aim to build a respectful classroom culture rather than rely on punitive methods. For example, techniques such as collaborative rule-setting, peer mediation, and restorative practices have shown promising outcomes in various learning contexts (UNESCO, 2022).

Globally, numerous studies have shown that effective classroom management positively correlates with student academic performance. In the United States, for instance, research by Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai (2021) found that proactive classroom management practices significantly increased student engagement and reduced behavioural problems, leading to improved academic outcomes. In sub-Saharan Africa, similar findings have emerged. A study conducted in South Africa by Skinner (1938) revealed that well-structured classrooms where teachers maintained discipline through positive reinforcement were more likely to report higher student achievement in core subjects like mathematics and language arts. Teachers who received training in learner-friendly classroom control strategies were also observed to be more effective.

In Nigeria, the relationship between classroom management and student performance is a pressing educational issue, particularly due to overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and inconsistent teacher training. According to Ogunsola & Adeyemo (2022), in several Nigerian public schools, ineffective classroom management contributes significantly to high levels of indiscipline, student disengagement, and poor academic results. They further noted that student performance in internal and external assessments was consistently higher in schools where teachers demonstrated strong classroom control and positive engagement techniques. However, despite the growing attention to classroom management in Nigeria, the application of best practices remains inconsistent. This gap underscores the need for further empirical studies that examine how various techniques are used, the contexts in which they are applied, and their actual influence on student outcomes, especially in regions experiencing educational growth and diversity, such as Abuja. The Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, as Nigeria's capital, is a strategic location for examining the impact of classroom management on student academic performance. The territory has experienced rapid population growth in the last two decades, which has significantly increased enrolment across primary and secondary schools. This rise in student population has outpaced the growth in educational infrastructure and teacher recruitment in many public schools, resulting in overcrowded classrooms and a high pupil-to-teacher ratio (Bako, 2022).

Some of the emerging issues observed and reported by Bello & Ijeoma (2022) are that schools are frequently plagued by kinds of behavior which are acts of indiscipline directed against constituted authorities and established rules such as students' intentional destruction of properties, consumption of alcohol, violent demonstration and cultism in recent times which disrupt the flow of classroom activities and interface with learning activities. Other acts of stealing, absenteeism, and truancy among the major antisocial discipline problems among upper basic students (Bello & Ijeoma, 2022).

Furthermore, the FCT presents a diverse educational setting comprising public, private, and international schools. This diversity also reflects a wide range of teaching approaches, student backgrounds, and behavioural dynamics, all of which require skilled and flexible classroom management. Teachers in the FCT often face challenges such as inadequate training in classroom control, cultural diversity among learners, and parental disengagement; factors that can complicate the teaching-learning process (Aliyu, 2023).

In some schools, classroom management is characterized by routine conflicts, high rates of distraction, and poor time utilization. In others, especially where professional development opportunities are available, teachers demonstrate effective practices that contribute to students' high academic performance. These disparities present an opportunity for a systematic investigation into how classroom management techniques are applied in the FCT, and what effects they have on learners' academic success. Given the national emphasis on improving learning outcomes and ensuring quality education for all, understanding the dynamics of classroom management in Abuja is both timely and necessary (Adeniji & Lawal, 2022). The findings from this study are expected to

inform educational policy, teacher training, and school leadership practices in the FCT and potentially other regions of Nigeria facing similar challenges.

Statement of the Problem

There is a growing concern regarding the persistent gap between the expected academic performance of students and the reality observed in many schools within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. Despite efforts to improve the quality of education, many learners continue to perform below standard in both internal and external assessments. This shortfall calls attention to underlying classroom dynamics that may be affecting students' ability to learn effectively.

One major factor that appears to influence academic performance is classroom management. In several schools across the FCT, classrooms are increasingly characterized by frequent disruptions, slow learner engagement, poor time management, and inconsistent discipline. Teachers are often overwhelmed, especially in large classes, and sometimes resort to reactive or authoritarian disciplinary methods that may further disengage learners rather than support their academic growth.

This study seeks to address these gaps by investigating the classroom management techniques currently in use across selected schools in the FCT and examining how these techniques influence students' academic performance. The findings are expected to provide practical insights for improving classroom practices and ultimately enhancing learning outcomes in the region.

Objectives of the Study

1. Identify the classroom management techniques commonly employed by teachers in selected schools within FCT, Abuja.
2. Examine the relationship between the application of classroom management techniques and the academic performance of students in the study area.
3. Assess the effect of selected classroom management strategies on students' academic achievement in FCT, Abuja schools.

Research Questions

RQ1: What classroom management techniques are commonly employed by teachers in selected government secondary schools within the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja?

RQ2: What is the relationship between the use of classroom management techniques and students' academic performance in selected government secondary schools in FCT, Abuja?

RQ3: To what extent do selected classroom management strategies (preventive, supportive, corrective) affect students' academic achievement in selected government secondary schools in FCT, Abuja?

Hypotheses of the Study

i. There is no significant relationship between the use of classroom management techniques and students' academic performance in selected government secondary schools in FCT, Abuja.
ii. Selected classroom management strategies (preventive, supportive, corrective) have no significant effect on students' academic performance in selected government secondary schools in FCT, Abuja.

Significance of the Study

The findings from this study are expected to be of value to a wide range of stakeholders in the education sector, particularly within the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, and similar urban educational environments in Nigeria and across Africa. The benefits of this study begin with **Teachers** as the primary implementers of classroom management strategies. They stand to benefit from practical insights into what techniques are most effective in promoting student engagement and academic success. This knowledge can assist them in refining their classroom practices and creating more structured, supportive learning environments. For both new and experienced teachers, the study could serve as a reference point for identifying techniques that are adaptable to their unique classroom contexts.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted to determine the influence of classroom management techniques on students' academic performance in government secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria. The descriptive survey design is appropriate because it allows for the collection of data

from a large sample, enables generalization of findings to a wider population, and supports both quantitative and qualitative analysis of responses.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises all teachers and students in government secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. According to data from the FCT Education Secretariat (2023), there are approximately 9,340 teachers and 183,000 students distributed across six Area Councils. These schools reflect diverse student backgrounds and varying classroom management realities, making them suitable for this investigation.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A total sample of 360 participants will be selected for the study, comprising 120 teachers and 240 students from six government secondary schools (one from each Area Council: AMAC, Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kuje, Kwali, and Abaji).

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the CMTQ will be determined using Cronbach's Alpha method after the pilot test involving 20 teachers and 40 students. The CMTQ yielded an alpha coefficient of **0.87**,

Result Presentation

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Teacher-Reported Classroom Management Techniques

School	Preventive (Mean = SD)	Supportive (Mean =SD)	Corrective (Mean = SD)
GSS Wuse Zone 3	3.58 = 0.25	3.01 = 0.32	2.83 = 0.48
GSS Garki	3.46 = 0.18	3.18 = 0.49	2.91 = 0.48
GSS Bwari	3.45 = 0.18	3.28 = 0.43	3.00 = 0.62
GSS Ushafa	3.46 = 0.14	3.28 = 0.39	2.94 = 0.60
GSS Gwagwalada	3.48 = 0.34	3.03 = 0.37	3.10 = 0.50
GDSS Dobi	3.66 = 0.24	3.20 = 0.27	3.16 = 0.64

Interpretation:

Preventive strategies had the highest usage across all schools, with means ranging from 3.45 to 3.66. Corrective strategies were the least consistently applied, though slightly higher in schools like GDSS Dobi and GSS Gwagwalada.

Table 2: Students' Academic Performance and Perception of Classroom Management

To determine how students perceive their classroom environment and how it relates to their academic performance, the Student Academic Performance Inventory (SAPI) was administered. Academic performance was measured through average term scores.

Descriptive Statistics of Student Perception and Academic Performance

School	Mgt. Perception (Mean = SD)	Average Perception (%)
GSS Wuse Zone 3	3.29 = 0.33	68.29 = 6.65
GSS Garki	3.23 = 0.39	66.71 = 6.05
GSS Bwari	3.22 = 0.29	67.04 = 6.26
GSS Ushafa	3.29 = 0.44	67.87 = 7.92
GSS Gwagwalada	3.07 = 0.44	67.62 = 9.38
GDSS Dobi	3.12 = 0.36	63.21 = 5.82

Interpretation

Students from schools with higher management perception scores also showed relatively higher academic performance. For example, students from GSS Wuse Zone 3 had both the highest perception (3.29) and the highest average score (68.29%).

Research Question Two: Correlation between Classroom Management and Academic Performance

To answer the second research question, "How do classroom management techniques affect students' academic performance?", a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to assess the relationship between students' perception of classroom management and their academic performance.

Result of Correlation Analysis:

- **r = 0.57**
- **p < 0.01**

Interpretation:
There is a **moderate positive and statistically significant** relationship between classroom management and student academic performance. This implies that improved classroom management is associated with improved academic outcomes.

Research Question Three and Hypothesis Testing
Do students taught in classrooms with effective management techniques perform significantly better than those in poorly managed classrooms?
To test this, a **One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)** was used. Students were categorized into three groups based on their perception of classroom management quality:

- **Low** (< 3.0)
- **Medium** (3.0–3.4)
- **High** (> 3.4)

Table 3: Mean Academic Performance by Management Perception Group

Group	Mean Performance (%)
High	70.95
Medium	69.56
Low	59.64

ANOVA Summary:

- **F (2, 117) = 51.92**
- **$p = 7.24 \times 10^{-17}$**

Interpretation:
Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected. There is a **significant effect of classroom management on academic performance**. Students in well-managed classrooms (high perception group) significantly outperformed those in poorly managed classrooms.

Summary of Findings

1. Teachers in FCT predominantly use preventive and supportive classroom management strategies.
2. Students perceive classroom management quality as moderately high, and their academic scores align with these perceptions.
3. There is a statistically significant positive correlation between classroom management and academic performance.
4. ANOVA results show a clear performance advantage for students in well-managed classrooms, confirming the impact of classroom strategies on outcomes.

Conclusion
Based on the results of this study, it is concluded that the effects of classroom management techniques on students' academic performance in selected government secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The findings consistently revealed that classroom management, particularly preventive and supportive techniques, significantly influences student academic achievement.

Recommendations

1. Adopt preventive classroom management techniques, such as establishing rules, using engaging lesson plans, and setting clear expectations.
2. Strengthen supportive practices, including frequent feedback, praise, and teacher-student rapport, which boost student motivation and accountability.
3. Provide adequate teaching and learning resources, improve infrastructure, and reduce class sizes, so that effective classroom management strategies can be fully implemented.

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Impact Of Cybersecurity Threats On Global Security: Implications For International Peace And Cooperation

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Abstract
Cybersecurity has emerged as one of the most pressing challenges to global security in the 21st century. The increasing reliance on digital technologies and interconnected networks has created vulnerabilities that are exploited by state and non-state actors through cyberattacks, espionage, ransomware, and disinformation campaigns. These threats not only endanger critical national infrastructures and economic systems but also destabilize diplomatic relations, erode trust, and undermine international peace. Unlike traditional military conflicts, cybersecurity challenges are complex due to their transnational nature, difficulties in attribution, and the involvement of diverse actors. This study examines the impact of cybersecurity threats on global security and highlights their implications for international peace and cooperation. It argues that effective global responses require multilateral cooperation, the development of international legal frameworks, and the establishment of shared norms to ensure cyberspace remains a domain of stability rather than conflict.
Keywords: Cyber security, Global Security, International Cooperation, Cyber Threats, Peace and Stability etc.

Introduction

In the 21st century, global security is no longer defined solely by traditional military threats but increasingly by the rise of cybersecurity challenges. The digital revolution has interconnected states, economies, and societies, yet it has also exposed critical vulnerabilities to malicious cyber activities such as espionage, ransomware attacks, disinformation campaigns, and cyberterrorism (Singer & Friedman, 2014). These threats transcend national borders, disrupt economies, and undermine trust in political institutions, thereby making cybersecurity a central concern in global security discourse. Unlike conventional security threats, cyber threats are often anonymous, asymmetrical, and difficult to attribute, which complicates state responses and international cooperation (Rid, 2013).

The impact of cybersecurity on global security is evident in cases where cyberattacks have targeted national infrastructures, financial systems, electoral processes, and even defense mechanisms. For instance, the 2007 cyberattacks on Estonia and the alleged Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. elections illustrate how cyber operations can destabilize nations and strain diplomatic relations (Healey, 2013). Moreover, the rise of non-state actors such as hacker collectives and terrorist organizations utilizing cyberspace expands the spectrum of security threats beyond state-centered paradigms (Clarke & Knake, 2010). These developments underscore the need to broaden the definition of security to include digital vulnerabilities as a pressing dimension of international peace and stability.

As the global community grapples with these challenges, questions of sovereignty, legal jurisdiction, and ethical responsibility come to the fore. Effective responses demand multilateral cooperation, shared norms, and international legal frameworks to govern cyberspace (DeNardis, 2014). Without such cooperation, cyberspace risks becoming a domain of unchecked conflict that undermines global peace. Therefore, this study explores the impact of cybersecurity threats on global security and examines the implications for international peace and cooperation, with a view to identifying strategies that can strengthen collective resilience in an increasingly digital world.

Conceptual Review

Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity refers to the practice and framework of protecting digital systems, networks, data, and critical infrastructures from unauthorized access, malicious attacks, and disruptions. At its core, cybersecurity encompasses the technologies, policies, and practices designed to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information in cyberspace (Stallings, 2018). Unlike traditional security, which focuses on physical assets and territorial sovereignty, cybersecurity operates within the virtual domain, addressing threats that are often transnational, asymmetric, and difficult to attribute to specific actors (Singer & Friedman, 2014).

Academically, cybersecurity is studied as both a technical and socio-political phenomenon. From a technical perspective, it involves cryptography, firewalls, intrusion detection, and risk management strategies to safeguard information systems (Andress, 2019). From a socio-political lens, cybersecurity examines how digital threats impact governance, international relations, and national security policies. For instance, cyberattacks on elections, financial systems, or defense infrastructures highlight how cybersecurity challenges are deeply entangled with global stability and diplomacy (Rid, 2013).

Furthermore, cybersecurity is not only reactive, defending against threats, but also proactive, involving the development of international legal frameworks, norms, and cooperative mechanisms among states to ensure peace and trust in the digital age (DeNardis, 2014). Scholars emphasize that without effective cybersecurity measures, societies risk exposure to cyber warfare, cybercrime, and digital authoritarianism, all of which pose significant threats to both domestic and international security. Therefore, cybersecurity stands as an essential component of contemporary security studies and global governance.

Global security

Global security is an evolving concept in international relations that extends beyond the traditional focus on state-centric military threats to encompass a wide array of transnational challenges that threaten the stability, safety, and survival of the international community. Traditionally, security studies emphasized the protection of state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and military defense (Walt, 1991). However, with globalization and interdependence, global security has come to include economic stability, environmental sustainability, human rights, cybersecurity, terrorism, pandemics, and migration (Buzan & Hansen, 2009).

Academically, global security can be understood as *"*the set of measures, policies, and cooperative mechanisms designed to address threats that transcend national borders and require collective international responses*"* (Krahmann, 2005, p. 12). Unlike national security, which focuses on a single state, global security emphasizes interconnectivity and the recognition that threats in one region; such as climate change, infectious disease outbreaks, or terrorism, can have worldwide repercussions (Paris, 2001).

The field of global security also reflects a shift from "hard security" (military defense) to "soft security" dimensions, including human security, sustainable development, and global governance. The United Nations, NATO, and other international institutions play crucial roles in advancing cooperative frameworks to manage these challenges (United Nations, 1994). Therefore, global security is not merely about the absence of war but about building resilient systems that safeguard peace, stability, and human well-being on a planetary scale.

International Cooperation

International cooperation is a foundational concept in international relations, referring to the process by which states, international organizations, and non-state actors work together to address shared challenges and pursue common goals. Keohane (1984) defines cooperation as the adjustment of state behavior to the actual or anticipated preferences of others, through a process of coordination that reduces conflict and enhances mutual benefits. Unlike mere coexistence, international cooperation implies deliberate efforts to align policies, share resources, and create frameworks for managing interdependence in the global system.

From an academic perspective, international cooperation is driven by the recognition that many contemporary issues; such as climate change, terrorism, pandemics, nuclear proliferation, and cybersecurity, are transnational in nature and cannot be effectively addressed by individual states acting alone (Axelrod & Keohane, 1985). Institutionalists argue that international organizations such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and African Union facilitate cooperation by providing rules, reducing transaction costs, and enhancing trust among states (Keohane & Nye, 2001).

Furthermore, international cooperation is not limited to formal treaties and institutions but also includes informal networks, regional partnerships, and multi-stakeholder engagements involving civil society and the private sector (Slaughter, 2004). Consequently, it is seen as both a practical necessity in an interconnected world and a normative ideal that contributes to peace, stability, and global governance.

Cyber Threats

Cyber threats refer to malicious activities conducted through digital technologies with the aim of compromising the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of information systems, networks, and data. They encompass a wide range of hostile actions, including hacking, malware deployment, phishing, ransomware attacks, denial-of-service (DoS) attacks, cyber espionage, and cyberterrorism (Bayuk, 2012). Academically, a cyber threat can be defined as *"*the possibility of a malicious attempt to damage or disrupt a computer network or system" (Craigen, Diakun-Thibault, & Purse, 2014).

Cyber threats are unique because they are often asymmetric, transnational, and difficult to attribute to specific actors. Unlike conventional security threats, cyberattacks can be launched remotely, by both state and non-state actors, at relatively low cost but with potentially massive global consequences (Rid, 2013). For example, state-sponsored cyber operations; such as the Stuxnet attack on Iran's nuclear program, demonstrate the geopolitical implications of cyber threats (Lindsay, 2013). At the same time, criminal organizations and terrorist groups exploit cyberspace for financial gain, propaganda, and disruption, highlighting the diverse nature of these threats (Clarke & Knake, 2010).

Scholars emphasize that cyber threats not only endanger national security but also undermine economic stability, societal trust, and international peace. As the world becomes increasingly digitized and interconnected, cyber threats represent a central challenge to global governance, requiring both technical defenses and international cooperation to mitigate risks (Singer & Friedman, 2014). Therefore, cyber threats are understood as multidimensional risks that bridge technology, security, politics, and law in the digital age.

Mechanisms by Which Cyber Threats Affect International Peace and Cooperation

Cybersecurity threats have become a defining challenge of global security in the 21st century. Unlike traditional security threats, which are territorial and largely military in nature, cyber threats are borderless, anonymous, and capable of inflicting large-scale harm on states, institutions, and individuals. Academically, these threats are understood as undermining the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of digital systems, which in turn affects critical infrastructures such as energy grids, financial networks, healthcare systems, and defense mechanisms (Bayuk, 2012; Craigen, Diakun-Thibault & Purse, 2014). The impact of cybersecurity threats on global security is multidimensional.

Challenges of Attribution and the Risk of Escalation

One of the defining characteristics of cyber operations is the difficulty of attribution. Unlike conventional attacks, cyber operations are often routed through proxies, botnets, or false-flag tactics that obscure their origin. This ambiguity destabilizes both national and international security by enabling espionage, cyber warfare, and the disruption of essential services. The 2007 cyberattacks on Estonia and the *Stuxnet* virus targeting Iran's nuclear facilities illustrate how cyber operations can escalate geopolitical tensions and threaten international peace (Rid, 2013; Lindsay, 2013).

Because attribution is rarely straightforward, the ability of states to assign responsibility and respond proportionately is severely complicated. Misattribution or premature accusations may trigger unintended escalation, diplomatic crises, or even reciprocal cyber and non-cyber responses. As Rid and Buchanan (2015) argue, attribution is not only a technical challenge but also a political act that directly shapes international trust and stability.

Erosion of Trust in Diplomatic and Multilateral Cooperation

Cyber intrusions targeting ministries of foreign affairs, international organizations, or multilateral negotiation processes erode diplomatic trust. Beyond the political realm, cyber threats also affect economic stability through financial crimes, intellectual property theft, and ransomware attacks that disrupt global markets (Clarke & Knake, 2010). When states suspect one another of espionage or covert manipulation of negotiation tables, whether in trade, arms control, or climate talks, confidence in diplomacy declines. Nye (2017) emphasizes that cyber espionage has become a structural feature of international relations, tolerated to some degree, but once exposed, it undermines the credibility and sincerity needed for wider global cooperation.

Transnational Spillovers and Civilian Harm

Cyberattacks often spread across borders, producing unanticipated global consequences. The *NotPetya* attack of 2017, for example, caused billions of dollars in damage worldwide, crippling shipping, finance, and healthcare systems far beyond the intended geopolitical target. Such spillover effects can create humanitarian crises, destabilize economies, and exacerbate tensions between states. Recognizing this, the United Nations Office for

Disarmament Affairs (2021) has emphasized that the potential for cyberattacks on critical civilian infrastructure to cause widespread harm has elevated ICT-related threats into the realm of international peace and security debates.

Undermining Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Operations

Cyber threats also endanger peacekeeping and humanitarian missions, which increasingly rely on digital infrastructures for logistics, communications, and the protection of beneficiaries' data. Vulnerabilities in these systems create opportunities for spoilers or malicious actors to disrupt or manipulate operations. Taddeo (2019) warns that such attacks risk creating "second-order harm" by weakening the effectiveness of missions designed to stabilize fragile regions, thereby prolonging conflict or reigniting violence. This undermines the UN's peace and security mandate and erodes international confidence in cooperative peacebuilding efforts.

Normative and Legal Ambiguities in Cyberspace

Unlike traditional warfare, cyberspace lacks universally binding rules that govern state behavior. This normative and legal ambiguity has eroded trust in democratic governance, as cyber-enabled disinformation campaigns and electoral interference weaken state legitimacy and international cooperation (Singer & Friedman, 2014). Attempts such as the *Tallinn Manual 2.0* have sought to interpret how international law applies to cyber operations, yet disagreements remain over issues such as sovereignty, proportionality, and thresholds for the use of force. This legal gray zone enables states to engage in disruptive or coercive behavior without triggering decisive international responses. Schmitt (2017) contends that the absence of consensus on binding norms fosters a permissive environment for strategic competition, ultimately undermining both cooperation and confidence-building.

Theoretical Perspectives for Understanding Cybersecurity Threats and their Implications for International Peace and Cooperation

Cybersecurity threats must be read through multiple, complementary theoretical lenses. No single International Relations theory explains all consequences; instead, each highlight different causal pathways by which cyber threats affect peace and cooperation of the global peace:

Realist Perspective: Cybersecurity as Power Politics and the Security Dilemma

From a realist standpoint, cybersecurity threats are manifestations of power struggles in an anarchic international system. States pursue cyber capabilities for espionage, coercion, and deterrence, which produces a cybersecurity dilemma: one state's defensive or offensive build-up is perceived as threatening by others, leading to escalation and instability (Nye, 2017). Incidents like the 2007 Estonia cyberattacks and the Stuxnet virus illustrate how cyber tools can serve as instruments of geopolitical competition and coercion. This raises the risk of conflict escalation and weakens the prospects for stable peace and cooperation.

Liberal Institutionalism: Shared Vulnerabilities and Cooperative Responses

Liberal institutionalists argue that global interdependence in cyberspace creates shared vulnerabilities, which, in turn, create incentives for cooperation. Cyberattacks such as *NotPetya* (2017) demonstrate how malware can unintentionally spread across borders, damaging states, companies, and critical infrastructure worldwide. Because no state can unilaterally insulate itself, international cooperation through institutions, regimes, and confidence-building measures becomes essential (Keohane, & Nye, 2012). However, weak enforcement mechanisms and trust deficits often undermine these initiatives.

Constructivist/Securitization Perspective: Norms, Identity, and the Framing of Threats

Constructivists focus on how cyber threats are socially constructed and securitized through political discourse. Governments frame certain cyber incidents (e.g., election interference, disinformation campaigns) as existential threats to justify extraordinary measures or alliances. Moreover, international cooperation depends on shared norms of responsible state behavior in cyberspace (Buzan, Wæver&Wilde, 1998). The lack of universal agreement on what constitutes legitimate versus illegitimate cyber operations weakens cooperation and perpetuates mistrust.

International Legal Perspective: Ambiguities and Enforcement Gaps

From a legal-institutional standpoint, cyberspace operates in a gray zone where international law applies unevenly. While principles of sovereignty, non-intervention, and proportionality are recognized, their

application to cyber operations is contested. According to Schmitt (2017), stated that the *Tallinn Manual 2.0* provides guidance, but states disagree on thresholds for "use of force" and "armed attack." This ambiguity enables states to exploit cyber means for coercion or sabotage while avoiding accountability, undermining international law as a foundation for peace and cooperation.

Critical Security Studies: Inequality, Vulnerability, and Human Security

Critical approaches argue that dominant narratives of cybersecurity focus too narrowly on state-centric military threats, ignoring structural inequalities, economic dependency, and civilian vulnerabilities (Taddeo, 2019). Cyberattacks on hospitals, humanitarian agencies, or civilian infrastructure undermine human security and disproportionately affect developing states with weaker cyber defenses. This perspective calls for rethinking international cooperation beyond state security toward inclusive frameworks that protect people, not just power.

The Basic Remedies for Addressing Cybersecurity Threats to Global Security Challenges

To address the exodus of the cybersecurity threats requires multidimensional approaches. Therefore, this study views the remedies for addressing cybersecurity threats to global security challenges into the followings:

i. Strengthening International Norms and Legal Frameworks

One remedy is the advancement of binding international norms and legal frameworks to govern state behavior in cyberspace. While initiatives such as the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) and the *Tallinn Manual 2.0* have outlined principles, greater consensus is needed on sovereignty, proportionality, and thresholds for cyber conflict (Schmitt, 2017). Clearer norms would reduce ambiguity, enhance accountability, and strengthen cooperative security frameworks.

ii. **Enhancing Multilateral Cooperation and Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs)**

Cybersecurity threats are transnational, requiring multilateral cooperation through organizations like the UN, NATO, African Union, and ASEAN (UNODA, 2021). Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs); such as information-sharing, joint attribution mechanisms, and crisis communication hotlines, reduce mistrust and prevent escalation. These cooperative approaches also help to harmonize responses to shared threats and preventing escalation to other states.

iii. Building National and International Cyber Resilience

States should invest in resilient critical infrastructure, cybersecurity awareness, and public–private partnerships to mitigate the impact of cyberattacks. Cyber resilience includes redundancy, rapid recovery, and secure supply chains. The *NotPetya* and *WannaCry* attacks revealed how fragile global systems can be, underscoring the need for robust defense-in-depth strategies (Nye, 2017). The states and international body should build a strong mechanism for fighting cybercrimes. For instance, the international security personnel should channel their security gadgets toward fighting digital security challenge than focusing on inter-state rivalry.

iv. Promoting Cyber Capacity-Building in Developing States

Global security depends on closing the digital divide in cybersecurity capabilities (Taddeo & Floridi, 2018). Many developing nations lack resources to defend critical infrastructure or participate in international cyber negotiations. Capacity-building programs; training, knowledge exchange, and technical assistance, help ensure inclusive participation in cooperative security arrangements and reduce global vulnerabilities. Countries like US, Japan, Garmany, and Russian should vote their security gadgets in fighting cybercrimes or carries the less developed countries alone in fighting digital security challenges, because cybercrimes is a cross-country activity and most of the less developed countries has no power or resources to fight the digital security threats and of course many of the cybercrimes have their agent across countries.

v. Encouraging Public–Private Partnerships and Information Sharing

Because much of cyberspace infrastructure is privately owned (e.g., telecommunications, cloud services), governments must collaborate with the private sector to detect, attribute, and respond to threats. Mechanisms like Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) and public–private threat intelligence sharing platforms enhance early warning and reduce systemic risk (Carr, 2016). The collaboration between private-public partnership is a child of necessity, because most of the public owned tools for fighting digital crimes may be weak or insufficient, then the private equipment could be useful for use. The inter-security collaboration between public-private could be productive for curtail digital crimes, because most of the private personnel have the full knowledge of the community based, they could provide useful information regards to the way about of the digital criminals.

Conclusion

Cybersecurity threats have become a great challenge of the 21st century, reshaping the landscape of global security and posing direct implications for international peace and cooperation. Unlike conventional security threats, cyber operations are borderless, asymmetric, and difficult to attribute, which increases the risks of miscalculation, escalation, and diplomatic friction. Incidents such as the attacks on Estonia (2007), *Stuxnet* (2010), and *NotPetya* (2017) demonstrate how cyber conflicts can destabilize states, disrupt global economies, and erode trust among international actors. The absence of universally binding legal and normative frameworks governing cyberspace further complicates collective responses. While efforts such as the *Tallinn Manual 2.0* and United Nations Group of Governmental Experts (UNGGE) discussions have made progress, significant divergences remain on sovereignty, proportionality, and acceptable state behavior in cyberspace. This legal and normative ambiguity provides room for strategic competition and exploitation, undermining confidence-building and peaceful cooperation.

Nevertheless, cybersecurity is not solely a source of conflict but it can also serve as a platform for cooperative security. Through fostering dialogue, establishing international norms, and strengthening multilateral institutions, states can work toward reducing cyber risks and promoting stability. The imperative lies in developing robust global governance mechanisms, enhancing resilience of critical infrastructure, and advancing confidence-building measures to prevent escalation. Primarily, cybersecurity threats are not just technological concerns but fundamental security, diplomatic, and ethical challenges. Addressing them requires a multidimensional strategy rooted in collaboration, transparency, and adherence to international norms. Only through sustained cooperation can the global community mitigate the destabilizing potential of cyber threats and secure the foundations of international peace and security.

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Restructuring In Nigeria: Maslahah As A Viable Tool For Effective And Efficient Decisions

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Abstract
Nigeria is a multi-religious country with about 250 ethnic groups and 500 languages. The heterogeneous nature of the country, no doubt, is one of the principal causes of its contemporaneous challenges both in politics and social interactions. There have been various calls for the need to restructure Nigeria as a country, so that it can become a better place to live, regardless of one's status, tribe, or religious background. Nigerians hold different views on the subject matter. It is either the country restructured on a regional basis or by devolving a significant role to each state in the development of its area. This paper examined the concept of Maslahah in Islam, using it as a tool to determine the better option between the two propositions. For an objective result, this work employed both historical and analytical research methods. It found that the need to ensure good governance and fiscal prudence by Nigerian stakeholders and statesmen, and giving each state a larger power of resource control and right to executive projects and works that fall under its territorial jurisdiction, assumes the position of Maslahah Daruriyyah (Necessary Interest). It is recommended that Nigerian leaders should be vigilant about Maslahal-Ummah (public benefit) and demands in order to avoid unnecessary social vices.
Keywords: Maslahah, decision-making, restructuring

Introduction

Nigeria is a country with about 250 ethnic groups and 500 languages (United States Embassy, 2012). With that, the country is divided, and in some cases, catered for based on three major and domineering ethnic groups, namely, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. Although there is the understanding that six regions of south-south, south-east, south-west, north-east, north-west and north-central are in place in the country, the first three mentioned tribes and their grouping methods are more recognized among Nigerians. To some Nigerians, poor governance accounts for the ugly experience that is presenting itself in the present day Nigeria; social vices is everywhere in the country. These range from robbery, kidnapping, cybercrime, boko-haram to intentional damage of government properties, such as vandalisation of fuel pumps. State governments are struggling to pay workers' salaries and embark on reasonable social infrastructure.

Some Nigerians have noticed signs of marginalization and decided to go against it, hence the call for restructuring on their part. Both political experts and non-experts have argued for the need to restructure Nigeria. This topic continues to attract compatriots' attention. Scholars, past and present, have written on the subject under discussion. However, there has not been a generally acceptable decision on the kind of structure that befits Nigeria. This current work examines the concept of *Maslahah* in Islam and uses it as a tool to further discover the best option between restructuring and none restructuring.

The Concept of *Maslahah* in Islam

It is important to first consider the etymological meaning of the term *Maslahah* since it is observed that the technical meaning of many words has un-disconnected link with their literal definition. *Maslahah*, literally, is derived from a trilateral Arabic verb '*ṣalaha'* or '*ṣaluha',* which is translated to mean 'to be good', 'to repair or to improve'; it means 'benefit' or 'interest'(AbdulHadi, 2016). Ar-Rafi said *Maslahah* is the antonym of *Mafsadah* (evil) and 'harmful'. In the encyclopedia of Islamic law, the word *Maslahah*, is from the Arabic language. *Maslahah* is the *Masdar* form of *Mādī* '*salaha'* and the singular (*mafrad*) form of the plural (*jama'*) '*Masālih'*, which means the same as the benefits (AbdulHadi, 2016).

This concept becomes narrow when the phrase *Al-Maslahah Al-Mursalah* is used. This is because the term *Maslahah mursalah* indicates unregulated public interest in the sense of not having been regulated by the Lawgiver (Allah), as no textual authority can be found on its validity or otherwise. In the Shari'ah, *Istislah*, which is morphologically in the same line as *Maslahah* in Arabic, is a method employed by the Muslim jurists to solve problems that find no clear answer in the religious text. Thus, *Istislah* is a proper ground for legislation when a *maslahah* is identified (Hafizul Mukhlis, 2019).

Al-Ghazali defined *Maslahah* as the consideration which secures a benefit or prevents harm, but is, in the meantime, harmonious with the aim and objective of the Sharī'ah (Hafizul Mukhlis, 2019). These objectives consist of protecting the five essential values, namely, religion, life, intellect, lineage and property. This implies that any step which secures the said values falls within the scope of *Maslahah,* and anything that is contrary to this is deemed *Masfadah* (evil). In his opinion, Al-Khawarizmī takes *maslahah* to mean the preservation of the

objectives of Islamic law by removing evil from creation (AbdulHadi, 2016). To Shatibi, *Maslahah* is a principle that concerns the subsistence of human life, the completion of livelihood and the acquisition of what a person's emotional and intellectual qualities require of him/her in an absolute sense (AbdulHadi, 2016). In this regard, *maslahah* as a concept and principle in the *Sharī'ah* is primarily for the benefit of man.

Muslim Jurists of various Islamic schools of thought have used different Arabic juridical terms such as *Istihsan*, *Istislah* and *Istishab* to describe *maslahah*. For example, the Hanafi school called it *Istihsan* (juristic preference) while the Maliki school of law regards it as *Al-Masālih mursalah* (public benefit or public welfare). As for the Hanbali school, it is called *Istislah* (seeking the best solution for the general interest) (Doi, 2007). Although there is more to it, Shafi' opposed *Istihsān* as a source of Islamic law on the understanding that such would open the door to the unrestricted use of fallible human opinion. Mohammed Muslihuddin (n.d, 214) devoted a whole article to registering his displeasure with the concept of *maslahah*. To him, both *Istihsan* and *maslahah* are opposed to analogy, and as such, they should be discarded.

An Examination of Classifications of *Maslahah*

Maslahah is classified into two, namely, *Maslahah* in consideration of the text of the *Sharī'ah* and *Maslahah* in consideration of the strength of considered benefits (Al-Mutairi, 1997). Majorly, the aspect of *Maslahah* that is relevant and useful to the subject under discussion is the category which is according to the strength of the considered benefits. This is because each type of this *Maslahah* has its functions and implications; thus, they are arranged according to their level of gravity. For example, the first type of *Maslahah,* in consideration of the strength of the considered benefits, is *Maslahah Daruriyyah* (Essential *Maslahah*) (Al-Mutairi, 1997). The importance of this type of *Maslahah* is felt in the meaning of the phrase 'essential *maslahah'*. It should be noted that essential *maslahah* is considered first because it is a type of *maslahah* on which the lives of the people depend, and their neglect leads to total disruption and chaos. Its scope covers the five necessary things referred to as objectives of *Sharī'ah* (Maqāsidu-sh- Sharī'ah), namely; religion (*Dīn*), life (*Nafs*), intellect ('*aql*), lineage or offspring (*nasab*) and property (*māl*). These five must be promoted and protected.

Maslahah Hajiyyah (complementary benefit) is another class of *maslahah*. This type of *maslahah* is supplementary to the five essential values whose neglect leads to hardship in the life of the community, although not to its total collapse. It appears the law of *Rukhsah* (concession) falls under this. Scholars have given the example of a concession given to the sick people, elderly and traveler not to observe fast and shorten the prayer for the consideration of *maslahah hajiyyah* (complementary benefit) (Al-Mutairi, 1997). The third class of *Maslahah* is *Maslahah Tahsiniyyah* (Luxurious benefit). This has to do with interest or benefit whose realization leads to improvement and the attainment of that which is desirable. A typical example of this is personal hygiene vis-a-vis '*Ibādah* (worship). Another example is the avoidance of extravagance in consumption (Al-Mutairi, 1997).

The realization of embellishment interest or benefit would lead to refinement and perfection in the customs and conduct of people at all levels of achievement. The three types of benefit are connected with the five objectives of *Sharī'ah,* which are expected to be the objectives of any would-be successful nation. We find al-Ghazäli, Ibn al-Qayyim, al-Shätibi and others giving statements confirming this matter as stated earlier in this paper. Everything which partakes in keeping these five principles is a benefit, and everything which disturbs their existence is an injury, and to drive away such a disturbing thing is also a benefit. No doubt, any nation that works towards this will be regarded as a successful nation. In this study, the level of the strength of the need for each of the kinds of restructuring ever discussed would be determined based on the proportion of the advantages and disadvantages available in taking each of the propositions. The one with the highest number of advantages to Nigerians, particularly, advantages that affect the five necessary things that concern them, would be prescribed by this work.

There are three classes of *Maslahah* in consideration of the text of the Sharī'ah, and they are classified from the viewpoint of the availability or otherwise of a textual authority in its favour. *Maslahah Mu'tabarah* is the first of this classification and is the benefit for which Allah has expressly upheld and enacted a law for its realization. For example, Allah enacted the law of retaliation (*Qisas*) for the protection of human life. There are also corresponding punishments for crimes like theft, fornication/adultery, highway robbery etc. This class of *Maslahah* falls under *Maslahah Darūriyyah*; the shortening and combining of prayers and breaking of fast during a journey are parts of *Rukhsah* that form *Maslahah Hajiyyah*. In this case, it is clear that each offence constitutes a proper ground for punishment in question and the validity of *Maslahah* is definitive (Qat'), and it is no longer open to debate. As for *Maslahah mulghah*, it is a nullified benefit (Slide, 2019). Here, whether directly or indirectly, Allah has ruled against this type of benefit. To this end, one can safely assert that it is not a benefit;

it only looks like one before man. This is because every law of Allah exists for the benefit of man. The fact that such is against the clear text is enough to prove its unnoticed harm.
The third classification is *Maslahah mursalah*. This class of *maslahah* is very wide, and the reason for such is not far-fetched. It is because it is neither discussed directly in the Qur'ān nor in the Hadith. Thus, it is left for the *Jihad* of a well-grounded scholar of Islam. This class, no doubt, covers the subject of this study as it examines the grounds on which restructuring or non-restructuring of Nigeria will be considered for the betterment of Nigerians themselves. *Maslahah mursalah* is an unrestricted public interest which the lawgiver has neither upheld nor nullified. In other words, no textual authority can be found on its validity or otherwise (Slide, 2019). This category of benefit should be considered on the grounds that it is proper and harmonious with the objectives of the Lawgiver; it secures a benefit and prevents a harm; and the *Sharī'ah* provides no indication as to its validity or otherwise. It should be noted that some Islamic scholars do not subscribe to the concept of *maslahah* at all, while some only condemn part of it. We find Imam Gazali, a leading Islamic theologian, opposing parts of *maslahah* that have to do with luxurious life. Meanwhile, it is the same Gazali who opined that any benefit which concerns itself with any of the five necessary things must be accepted even if such has not been expressly addressed in either the Qur'an or Hadith. Here, the link between *maslahah daruriyyah* as a type of *maslahah* and *maslahah mursalah* is evident. In the end, *maslahah mursalah* is a class which has been validated after the divine revelation came to an end.

The Government Structure in Nigeria

In the history of Nigeria, prior to amalgamation, citizens lived in their various domains, such that each locality is attributed to the ethnic group it belongs to as early as 1100 BC. Religion and ethnicity play a significant part in the history of Nigeria; there were various ethno-religious wars fought in the country (Ugorji, 2019). Many African civilizations settled in the region that is today Nigeria, such as the Kingdom of Nri, which contains the Igbo and its sister ethnic groups. There were the Benin Empire, the Old Oyo Empire, and the Hausa/Fulani Empire etc. In 1914, the area was formally united as the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria. The government structure then remained divided into the Northern and Southern Provinces and Lagos Colony (Wikipedia, 2019). During this time the colonial masters were fully on ground. After World War II and in response to the yearnings of Nigerian nationalism for self-government, the British government did the needful to ensure a federal system of government in the country. The role played by influential Nigerians such as Herbert Macauley, Namdi Azikwe, Saudana of Sokoto, S.L Akintola, Obafemi Awolowo and a host of others cannot be overemphasized. On 1st October, 1954, the colony became the autonomous Federation of Nigeria. In the end, precisely on 27th October 1958, Britain agreed that Nigeria would become an independent state on 1st October 1960 (Wikipedia, 2019).
Nigeria's independence marks the beginning of parliamentary government as contained in the available constitution at that time. During this time, the regional government was in place such that each region is independent to a larger extent. The 1960 constitution shared legislative power between the federal and regional governments, and the regional government had a substantial amount of autonomy and financial independence. In 1979, Nigeria amended its constitution and changed from a parliamentary government to a presidential system of government (Adekoya, 2019).

Causes of calls and agitation for restructuring Nigeria

History records the prominence and the domineering power of the three major ethnic groups of Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba over others. In reality, this is one of the major challenges Nigeria as a country is facing in the present-day. It will be recalled that the earliest political parties such as the NCNC, NPC and Action Group, were products of each of the three major ethnic groups. For example, Nnamdi Azikwe of the Eastern Region led the NCNC, while the NPC was led by the Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Amadu Bello. The Action Group was led by Obafemi Awolowo, an erudite and accomplished lawyer who was educated at the University of London. The minorities of the Niger Delta, Mid-West, and the Middle Belt regions of Nigeria were always uncomfortable with the notion that they had to fit into the tripod of the largest ethnic groups that was Nigeria – Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo. Many of them – Ijaw, Kanuri, Ibibio, Tiv, Itsekiri, Isang, Urhobo, Anang, and Efik etc. – were from ancient nation-states in their own right (Achebe, 2012).
The constitution of the country is believed to be another cause. The legislative list in the constitution allocates power between the federal, state and local government. The legislative list is divided into the exclusive, concurrent and residual lists. Each of the three arms of government is expected to exercise political power in respect of matters on the list allocated to it. The exclusive list contains matters over which only the federal government has power to execute, while items in the concurrent list are left for both the federal government and

state government. Where there is a conflict of interests, the state takes the back seat (Adekoya, 2019). Research shows that the way the legislative list is arranged is not in favour of the state, hence, the need to restructure it. Poor governance is one of the major causes of the call for restructuring. In Nigeria today, good governance and fiscal prudence are very rare. Nigerian political office holders find joy in considering public funds as an extension of their bank account; fiscal federalism is nowhere to be found.

As a matter of fact, the call for restructuring is not new. One can safely assert that it is as old as Nigeria. A typical example of this is Biafra. The agitation for Biafra independence majorly by the Igbo is dated to 1967. Although Achebe's assertion that there is national resentment for Igbo may appear as emotional and support for one's ethnic group, his description of the Igbo characteristics requires deep thinking. He said, "the Igbo culture being receptive to change, individualistic and highly competitive, gave the Igbo man an unquestioned advantage over his compatriots in securing credentials for advancement in Nigerian colonial societies (Achebe, 2012).

The call for Biafra state is suspected to be the result of what the Igbo deem as the unequal sharing of manpower in the public services, the injustice in the distribution of state allocation as well the insignificant control the state has over resources, particularly those within its territory. This is evident in the words of Achebe when he said "…special attention instead was paid to the manpower distribution within the public services, where 45 percent of the managers were Igbo and it is threatening to reach 60 per cent by 1968 (Achebe, 2012)." In fact, by that time, the government of the western region published a white paper outlining the dominance of the ethnic Igbo in key government positions in the Nigerian Railway Corporation and the Nigerian Ports Authority (Achebe, 2012). It is clear now that the call for Biafra state is motivated by, among others, what an Igbo regards as unequal sharing of power and resource control. The federal character principle is said to have been responsible for this.

Argument for and against Restructuring Nigeria: A Critical Study

The argument for and against restructuring is primarily found among Nigerian stakeholders and statesmen. In recent times, particularly, during the 2019 election which ushered in the second term of President Mohammadu Buhari, prominent Nigerians like former vice-president, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, former vice-president, Yemi Osinbajo, Senator Sheu Sani, former Kano state governor, Alhaji Abdullahi Ganduje and a host of others are in the forefront in debating this topic. For example, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar argued that Nigeria is already due for restructuring. He highlighted some challenges which Nigeria faces. He said "the current structure, which concentrates too much power and resources in the centre, makes us economically unproductive, uncompetitive, indolent, politically weak, disunited and unstable" (Obiejesi, 2019).

In this context, Atiku prescribed either regional government or allocation of substantial power to the state governments. This is clear when he further listed about seven points to be followed in taking his advice. Those are: devolution of powers and resources to the states; no state will receive less Federal funds than today as a result of restructuring; matching grants from the federal government to the states to help them grow their internally generated revenue position; the privatisation of unviable federal Government-owned assets; a truly free market economy driven by the laws of demand and supply; replacing state of origin with state of residence, and passing the PIGD so that our oil and gas sector will run as a business with minimal governmental interference (Obiejesi, 2019). In reality, the first three points of Alhaji Atiku supports resource control, by the states. Others points are based on the need for good governance and fiscal prudence, with the exclusion of "the privatisation of unviable federal government-owned assets." If there is good governance as earlier canvassed for, there will be proper monitoring of government assets, which will make such viable.

It should be stated that vice-president Osinbajo's view is antithetical to Atiku's. The former believes that the problem with Nigeria is not a matter of restructuring. Although Osinbajo was an advocate of substantial power to state government, he argued that restructuring in whatever shape or form will not mean much if the political leaders see public resources as an extension of their bank accounts (Obiejesi, 2019). The point here is that, Osinbajo laid credence on good governance and fiscal prudence to fix Nigeria. He said, "I then argued that what we required now was not geographical restructuring but good governance, honest management of public resources, deeper fiscal Federalism, and a clear vision for development." In this regard, one can safely assert that although the vice-president initially put weight on the allocation of substantial power to the state, has learnt to let it be. Conversely, the 2014 confab provided that additional States be created (Adekoya, 2019). This idea no doubt, is not enough to solve the problem at hand. This is evident as some states are currently owing workers' salaries and undergoing economic degradation.

Former Governor Abdullahi Ganduje is another eminent figure who partly argued against restructuring, most importantly, geopolitical restructuring. He noted that geo-political restructuring is not the panacea to the nation's current socio-economic woes, stressing that Nigerians need to restructure their mindsets to return the country to

the path of progress. He stressed that the US attained its present status because of the ability of its leaders to harness the positive thoughts and actions of its heterogeneous population and not by restructuring the country along geo-political divides as being advocated by some groups and individuals in the country (Admin, 2019).

***Maslahah* as a Viable Tool for Efficient and Effective Decision**

The Maslahah pertinent to this study, in terms of the benefits, are *Maslahah Daruriyyah*, *Maslahah Hajiyyah* and *Maslahah Tahsiniyyah*. In this case, every position on restructuring will be scaled according to the benefits contained therein, and the one with the highest weight and advantage will be recommended here. In summary, the positions taken so far include regional government (this include geopolitical restructuring), division of country into three independent states as in the case of Biafra, allocation of substantial power to state (synonym of 'resource control' by the state), good governance and fiscal prudence, creation of more states, amendment of Nigerian constitution to restructure the legislative list among others.

As for the first point which is the call for regional government, it is observed that such has helped the country in the past. Many historical and financially-demanding works and projects were judiciously and easily executed by individual regions. For example, the tallest cocoa house, the aged learning centers and some other social infrastructures in the Yoruba community were products of the efforts of this type of division. In this type of system, the federal government will still exist with some functions allocated to it. Although it is understood that the legislative list of that time plays a significant role in the success recorded, the truth is that if the government is mismanaged, no tangible result will be achieved. People refer to achievements of the regional arrangement, practiced in the past, to justify the need to revisit the idea. However, it appears that such people have easily forgotten that there was corruption during that period, even though it was not as bad as it is in present-day Nigeria. This study is of the view that regional government is good but not the best; the position is rated as *Maslahah Hajiyyah* since shunning it is not disastrous.

Another reason is that the call for restructuring cuts across what some perceived as marginalization. Political commentators assert that it was the unequal access to political power with its attendant economic advantages by the country's major and minor ethnic groups and the ensuing agitation for restructuring Nigeria, which led to the civil war of 1967-1970. Here, if the regional government is in place and minor ethnic groups still feel marginalized by individual region, it means the call for restructuring will still surface. Therefore, it is *Maslahah Tahsiniyyah* to call for restructuring Nigeria into three independent States in the case of Biafra. In fact, it may be disastrous as the fight for the survival of the fittest will still surface within individual states (country). Added to this is the creation of more states as provided in the outcome of the 2014 confab. Although the aim is to cater to and satisfy some minor ethnic groups, the fact is, it cannot cover all. In truth, it has its advantages, but it is a luxurious benefit; if it is done, it is good and if it is not, there is no harm. This is so because it may add value to the existing experience, and it may not.

In the case of giving each state a greater power of resource control and the right to execute projects and works that fall under its territorial jurisdiction, one can say it is a matter that requires quick attention, thus, it assumes the position of *Maslahah Daruriyyah*. As a matter of fact, Nigeria current situation requires quick attention and steps like this to re-fix it. There are vices and poverty everywhere in the country. These range from unemployment, cybercrime of various types, theft/ highway robbery, kidnapping, money ritual, vandalization of fuel pumps, Boko Haram, killing by herdsmen, drug trafficking, to some other noticed and unnoticed ethnic or religious conflicts; all concern the five necessary things that are regarded as objectives of *Sharī'ah*. The ability of a state to control these socioeconomic cum political and religious problems lies on the type of power within its reach. For example, there have been calls for community and state police, to prevent many social vices. When a substantial power is allocated the states, they would be able to secure their territories.

Finally, the major point that is considered as *Maslahah Daruriyyah* here is the need to ensure good governance and fiscal prudence by Nigerian stakeholders and statesmen. The place of this point in the socioeconomic cum political and religious life of Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. In fact, this point alone, without the consideration of others, can withstand the test of time as regards the subject under study. Here, Vice President Osinbajo is right when he said "restructuring in whatever shape or form, will not mean much if our political leaders see public resources as an extension of their bank accounts."

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has examined the concept of *Maslahah* in the religion of Islam, such that it served as a tool to determine the effective and efficient decision as regard the need to restructure Nigeria and the need not to do so. The work accounted for the system of government that was in place in the country in the past and the one that is in place in present-day Nigeria. In reality, a very insignificant difference is felt between the two and yet the

former is praised at the expense of the latter. The study featured various arguments on *Maslahah* as a viable tool for effective and efficient decisions. In the end, it was discovered that good governance and fiscal prudence by Nigerian stakeholders and statesmen assumes the position of *Maslahah Daruriyyah* as the country is urgently in need of such to rescue it from the everyday ugly experience it is going through. Now it is understood that Nigeria needs to be restructured. Only that, the nature of such restructuring must be unambiguously spelt out as done in this study. The Nigerian government is therefore advised to treat this as a matter of urgency and adhere to it to ensure a better Nigeria. We recommend here that the government should be vigilant of *Maslahah* of the *Ummah* (public benefits), particularly those that are necessary in order to avoid social chaos, among others.

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Insecurity In Nigeria: Analysis Of Its Impact On Nigeria Christian Corpers' Fellowship (NCCF) Activities In Northeast

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Abstract
This study examines the insecurity in Nigeria and its impact on the activities of the Nigeria Christian Corpers' Fellowship (NCCF) in the Northeast geopolitical zone. Insecurity poses a serious challenge to the activities of Christian fellowships in the Northeast. The objectives of this study were to determine the impact of insecurity on NCCF prayer meetings in the Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria, and to assess the impact of insecurity on NCCF Bible studies in the region. Research questions and hypotheses were in line with the objectives were formulated. A descriptive research design of survey type was adopted in this study. The target population was all NCCF members in the Northeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was used in which the sample size of 795, that is, 50% of the 1587 study population emerged through a proportionate stratified sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and oral interview schedule. Analysis of the collected data (606 filled questionnaires, that is, 76.2%) was conducted using the statistical tool of frequency, percentage, mean scores and t-test using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) IBM version 26. The benchmark for decision making mean with regard to answering the research questions stood at ≥ 2.50 as agreed, while mean values less than 2.50 were disagreed. The independent samples t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance. Eighteen past and present leaders were interviewed to complement the questionnaire findings. One of the study findings was that insecurity affects NCCF members' attendance, especially when there is curfew. Based on the discovery, the study recommends live streaming of prayer and Bible study using its social media handles, such as Facebook and Twitter for members to join whenever there is a restriction of movement.
Keywords: Insecurity, Nigeria Christian Corpers' Fellowship, Prayer Meeting, Bible Study

Introduction

One of the essential variables whose presence is not negotiable where living things exist and must be in place as a predicate to growth and development in every sector of a nation's economy is peace. It is one of the foundations that must be in place to find a solution to a large extent for any other societal problem. When people live in fear, worry and anxiety, one can be sure that little or nothing can be achieved. This is hinged on the fact that it is only when there is no war, violence, anarchy, terrorism, insurgency, in the society that any legitimate activity (educational, religious, agricultural, economic, political, social) can be carried out (Shehu, 2024). According to Shuaibu (2018), Shehu (2024), Yohanna and Bitrus (2024), insecurity is one of the societal problems that has bedeviled Nigeria – Northwest (banditry), North-central (farmers-herdsmen clash), Southeast and South-south (militant IPOB, MASSOB), Southwest (OPC) and the Northeast (Boko Haram).

However, the geographical area that this study was concerned with, as regards insecurity, is the Northeast geopolitical zone. The Northeastern region or geopolitical zone is that part of Nigeria that is made up of six (6) states, namely: Adamawa, Yobe, Gombe, Bauchi, Taraba and Borno. It is that part of Nigeria where one of the dreaded terrorist groups in the world is domiciled, a place (especially Borno) that is often referred to as the home of Boko Haram with its major camp at the Sambisa forest in Northeast geopolitical zone forms National border with Cameroon, Chad and Niger Republics (Haruna, 2019; Shuaibu, 2018; Yusuf, 2021; Shehu, 2024). The Northeast has witnessed various kinds of cruel activities perpetrated by the Maitatsine, political thugs, Boko Haram terrorist group, ISWAP, and farmers and herders to mention just a few (Abetangs, Kwasau and Mamman, 2021). Their activities disrupted religious, economic, agricultural, social, political and academic

endeavours of the inhabitants to varying degrees. Places of worship were burnt, bombed, and broken, as well as killing of adherents in the cause of observing their religious obligations, while some lost their property, businesses, and ancestral homes to save their lives and those of their loved ones. More so, even those who were on national service, that is, NYSC corps members, NCCF members to be specific, were not left out of the challenges people encounter in the region. They suffer one thing or the other due to the security problem encountered by their host community. Their activities have definitely affected human activities and existence in diverse ways, irrespective of age, social and academic status, religion, among others. It is on this basis that the study was undertaken to survey how the security problem in Northeastern Nigeria affects the activities of the Nigeria Christian Corpers' Fellowship (NCCF).

Statement of the Problem

The Northeast had been experiencing security challenges for more than a decade now, with the resultant effect of serious destruction of lives and property cutting across people of various faiths, ethnic groups, political and social status, gender, age, and educational background. A lot of places of worship and adherents have been destroyed and killed due to the insecurity that has bedeviled the region. And since the security of lives and property is under threat, economic, political, academic, social, and religious activities must have certainly been affected, since it is only in a peaceful atmosphere that such activities can be carried out by adherents without any doubt, as expected. There are times when insecurity in the Northeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria warrants restriction of movements of persons from one place to another, restrictions of gathering in open or public places such as markets, hospitals, schools and places of worship thereby denying people from exercising and enjoying their universal fundamental human rights as enshrined in the constitution of the Nigeria, African Union and the United Nations (UN) Charter. Under such situations, people experience various challenges in life, such as the inability to gather together for worship or observe any religious obligation as expected, which negatively affects adherents and religious organizations. The Nigeria Christian Corpers' Fellowship (NCCF) is one among many faith-based organizations operating in Northeastern Nigeria, under the auspices of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme. Therefore, since NCCF operates in North-East Nigeria, this study looked at how its activities were affected by the insecurity in the area.

The Study Objectives

The study set out to achieve some specific objectives, which are:

i. Determine the impact of insecurity on the NCCF prayer meetings in Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria.
ii. Assess the impact of insecurity on the NCCF Bible studies in Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria.

Research Questions

In view of the stated study problem and its objectives, the following research questions were put forward to guide the study:

i. What is the impact of insecurity on the NCCF prayer meetings in Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria?
ii. What is the impact of insecurity on the NCCF Bible studies programme in Northeast Geopolitical zone, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are postulated for the study:

HO_1: There is no significant difference in the opinions of married and unmarried respondents on the impact of insecurity on the NCCF prayer meetings in the Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria.

HO_2: There is no significant difference in the opinions of southern and northern corps members (respondents), on the impact of insecurity on the NCCF Bible studies programme in the Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Social theories are ideas that aim to explain societal problems, such as ethno-religious conflicts, terrorism, communal clashes, and political thuggery, which breed insecurity in society. In other words, they are an organized body of knowledge that attempts to explain, describe, and predict, or debunk, social phenomena. And through its efficacy in predicting the future, it serves as a tool for social change that affects the various

structures of society, including directing people's ways of life (Muhammed, 2021; Shuaibu, 2018). The Instrumentalist/Economic Recess and Deprivation theory, Structural Functionalist theory, and Relative Deprivation theory were employed in explaining and describing the precarious insecurity atmosphere in the study area. Akuya (2014) revealed that the instrumentalist maintained that religion is employed by the powerful elites to advance interests that are not necessarily religious as mechanisms to protest forms of deprivation, exclusion, alienation, poverty, marginalization, failed development, and public corruption. Additionally, they acknowledged the role of religion in aggravating conflicts, but it is doubtful if they actually cause conflicts. The theory is elastic and can be stretched to implicate the Nigerian state in areas such as structural violence, failure in governance, public corruption, and inability to manage the economy and national diversity, the weak management of state and religion relationship, the decomposition of the state, as well as promoting authoritarian rule, among others. More so, some of the promoters of this theory holds that religious conflicts in northern Nigeria can be traced to the pre-colonial slave raids as well as the developments that took place during and after the Usman Dan Fodio's jihad which depicts Premordial's view of Instrumentalism to trace the current conflicts/unrests to "ancient hatred" in Nigeria's development history (Akuya, 2014).

The Structural Functionalist theory whose origin is traceable to Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), that contributes to its development and later refined (modified) by Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), Talcott Parson (1902-1979 and Robert Merton (1920-2003), is that which main belief is that certain things in the society such as religion, education, politics, industry, economy, culture alongside social order are in place and work in mutual synergy for promoting solidarity as well as harmony. They are interconnected. They are subsystems that if anyone is affected, the entire system will be automatically affected (Muhammed, 2021). The society is like the human body parts with different function that keeps the whole body working effectively. Once anything affects a part, it affects the whole. The functionalist sees insurgency, terrorism and the likes of diseases and threats as demoralizing to society. For every society where rebels and terrorists are found, is sick, and that which falls short of carrying out its responsibility is not safe, hence, the rise of insurgents/terrorists due to the inability of some social institutions to perform their functions. Structural functionalists further believe that each person in society is expected to function positively, accept integration alongside stability through consent. If there is adherence to the principles, there would not be insurgency, but where there is no agreement, there would also not be stability. Where stability is lacking, integration will be a mirage, and if integration is missing, the existence of a nation or society would be a daydream (Shuaibu, 2016). Therefore, in the lens of functionalism, as contained in Muhammed (2021), insecurity is a subsystem of the social control of institutions in human society that affords a section of society "functional prerequisites" for the survival of its members, to ensure they are not extinct. Furthermore, violent conflicts that give birth to insecurity, such as armed robbery, terrorism, kidnapping, and ethno-religious crises, among others, provide unofficial or illegal employment for their perpetrators. They are acts that help them to adjust or design an innovative means of survival, seeing that the rate of unemployment as well as poverty is on the increase in Nigeria (Muhammed, 2021).

The relative deprivation theory, as a tool of analysis, is another theory employed by the researcher to explain the phenomenon of insecurity in Nigeria. According to Isa and Edita (2020), relative deprivation theory displays a gap between the expected and achieved socio-economic and political opportunities, which, when not evident (visible), gives room for violent reactions that, in turn, give rise to insecurity. The theory holds that social deviance, such as kidnapping, armed robbery/banditry, terrorism, political thuggery, to mention but a few, is the brainchild of the failure of the state to make available the expected roles of the government towards the citizenry. Also, Ted Gurr, one of the proponents of this theory, argues that people become dissatisfied if they feel they have less than they should and could have. In the passage of time, such dissatisfaction, if not properly handled, produces frustration and then rebellion against the (perceived or real) source/cause of their deprivation (Isa and Edita, 2020). It is the rebellion that breeds insecurity such that no any meaningful development can be attains in every sector of the nation's economy, if no immediate positive measures are put in place to address the problem.

Considering the theories in the light of the Nigerian insecurity situation anomaly, especially in the North-East, it is apparent from the aforesaid that the society which is made of various structures that makes it to function effectively is sick, hence its malfunctioning manifestation in the form of insecurity bedeviling it, taking away peace on which every meaningful progress and development in the religious sector among others thrives is hinged on in that nobody can participate any religious activity in places of worship as expected in a chaotic atmosphere.

Conceptual Clarification

Insecurity

This is the situation of being vulnerable to danger or the threat of danger. Also, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety. The exposure could be as a result of inadequate measures against insecurity by the state or by a group of people etc. This usually occurs when the law enforcement agents are poorly educated, trained, remunerated and motivated. The concept is seen as a state of not being secure in certain environments (Adegbami, 2013), while Ajodo-Adebanjo and Okorie (2014), view insecurity as a state of being subject to danger or threat. In such a situation, people's state of mind concerning safety could be categorized by self-doubt and defenselessness, and such persons could consider themselves targets for harm. Ugah, Ortserga and Degarr (2022) assert that insecurity is the opposite of the word security, which, in a layman's understanding, is the absence of peace. This includes hazards, danger, absence of protection, safety and a state of danger (Okonkwo, Ndubisi & Anigbogu, 2015). Similarly, Agogbua, Mgbatogu and Nzewi (2022), see insecurity as a situation that exposes one to harm, loosing property and livelihood; a state of fear that emanate from lack of protection from attack, threat or exposure to danger.

Factors Responsible for Insecurity in Nigeria

There are a lot of factors responsible for the security challenges being experienced in Nigeria. First, terrorism which involves the use of violence to acquire political aim or forcing another party to certain steps that they may not necessarily want to has also been a cause of insecurity in Nigeria in that most of the terrorist groups such as Boko Haram, Herdsmen, Niger Delta Avengers have destroyed many lives and property and brought pains to people especially in the northern part of Nigeria (Agogbua, Mgbatogu & Nzewi, 2022). Equally, the nefarious acts of terrorist such as bombing, kidnapping, killing of people and destruction of public and private property had caused mayhem to the masses Musa (2021) on the terrorism/violent extremism, argues that the threat of terrorism orchestrated by Boko Haram continue to unleash unstoppable attacks on both soft and high-profile targets in the northeast with an ultimate aim of creating an Islamic Caliphate.

Second, proliferation of small arms and light weapons is another variable responsible for insecurity in the country. Barde (2023) submits that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons among civilians contributes to the conflicts between farmers and herders, and that the proliferation of arms, especially in Africa, has been an issue of concern globally among scholars in the international relations discipline. Small arms and light weapons were a major source of stockpiles that were pumped into Africa in the 1970s and 1980s by the Soviet Union, the USA, and their cohorts to foster proxy interstate wars. The civilians were able to acquire such arms from official sources due to factors which include the breakdown of state structure, lax control over national armory, security personnel and poor conditions of service. The war and political upheaval in some African countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leon, Libya and the Democratic Republic of Congo, give room for sales of weapons in Nigeria, as held by a lot of people. It is these weapons that unscrupulous persons utilize to perpetrate crimes such as armed robbery, terrorism/insurgency, militancy, kidnapping, intra-state ethno-religious crisis, as well as communal conflicts among others (Musa, 2021; Shehu, 2024; Bukar, 2024).

Third, religious fanaticism/extremism is also one of the strong causes of security problems. It is often said that Nigerians are very religious and that the nation is one of the world's most religious countries (Ikeh, 2022). However, as true as the saying is, it has its own challenges. This religiosity has been taken to the extreme state by some individuals and groups, such that it becomes injurious to humanity instead of beng helpful in proffering solutions to societal problems in Nigeria. According to Salifu and Adama (2022) and Shehu (2024), religious indoctrination, fundamentalism, fanaticism and extremism have contributed a lot to Nigeria's insecurity in that attacks in recent times on churches and Christians in the northern part of the nation by Islamic extremists have made many states in the north unsafe for living as well as property ownership. The harm the extremists or religious fanatics have done to mankind is unexplainable in that it has delayed workable political agreements and brutalized societies. Religious violence has given rise to the assassination and attempted assassination of some heads of government, together with the irretrievable breakup of internal harmony. Ugwu and Eneh (2022) argue that religion, through extremism, has produced insecurity, which is not limited to physical violence, as well as attacks but moves to include emotions, means of livelihood, growth, education, just to mention a few. Other factors responsible for insecurity includes weak criminal justice system, bribery and corruption, desire to actualize ethnic agenda, unemployment, farmers herders conflicts.

The Nigeria Christian Corpers' Fellowship (NCCF)

In fact, a discourse on the history of NCCF cannot be done successfully in isolation of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme, as it is through this scheme that the vision and mission of NCCF, as prophesied

by Pa Elton, begin to find expression. It was said that a time will come when Nigerian youths will take the gospel of Jesus Christ to every nook and cranny of the nation through a platform that the government will establish in the future. The NYSC is a federal government agency set up to be a medium through which the Nigerian youths, especially graduates who are not above thirty years on graduation from various tertiary institutions within or outside the country, will serve their 'fatherland" within a period of one year. The scheme has been doing well a lot since its inception during the military administration of General Yakubu Gowon. According to Muogbo, Eze and Obananya (2021) and NCCF Gombe State Chapter Bible Study Manual (2023), the NYSC scheme came on board as a solution to the ruptured unity among Nigerians after the civil war. It is meant to serve as a means of fostering harmony among the various ethnic groups or regions in the country, in other words, a medium for national integration. The scheme was established by the decree 24 of the 1973 constitution, as promulgated on the 22nd day of May, 1973. This became necessary due to the urgent need of resolution after the 1973 Nigerian civil war. The Nigeria Christian Corpers' Fellowship (NCCF) came into being as a fulfillment of the prophecy given by a notable British missionary known as Sydney Granville Elton, who came to Nigeria in the 1930s and lived in Ilesha, Osun state (Idowu, 2019). Ayodeji (2016) posited that Elton was quoted as saying, "Christianity was never designed to be comfortable but revolutionary. It had to be completely revolutionary if it had to succeed in changing men, saving them, meeting their needs and thus changing conditions and nations…Jesus used no violence, but He was the true revolutionary." More so, Elton saw a daring generation of Nigeria and African Christians who, in the last days, would lead global Christian thought and experience. He believed he was called to prepare the way for that generation, to point the way to the future. His greatest legacy to Nigerian Christians was the vision he cast for the future." The establishment of the NYSC scheme sets the ball rolling for fulfillment of the prophecy. It serves as the spring board or vehicle of conveying NCCF to manifestation and fulfillment as prophesied by "Pa Elton". It was NYSC the platform that gave birth to NCCF, a body of Christian Corpers who are graduates of various institutions of higher learning, posted to states different from their state of origin to serve the country, utilize the skills they learnt in and outside the school to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to people in the cause of the mandatory one year of service through rural rugged and other avenues in all the 36 states of the federation including the FCT Abuja (NCCF Batch 'A' Stream II Orientation Camp Bible Study Manual, Gombe State, 2023). More so, in order to have harmony in coordination nationally, NCCF has a national dimension with headquarters located in Jos, Plateau state. A year national conference in Plateau state has been a tradition (NCCF Gombe State Chapter Batch 'B' Bible Study Manual "An Exceeding Great Army", 2020; Idowu, 2019). The fellowship vision is to ensure that corps members encounter Jesus Christ and are effectively equipped to preach the gospel and disciple men everywhere in Nigeria (Alechenu, 2019). Thus, from the above vision statement, the core vision of NCCF is to evangelize and make disciples (Evangelism and Discipleship) of all nations as commanded by Jesus Christ. Among the activities carried out by NCCF are Bible studies, prayer meetings, rural rugged evangelism as well as urban evangelism, medical evangelism, charity works, and community services. Prayer and Bible studies are key variables in discipleship, that is, the means of teaching one to become like Jesus.

Some Activities of NCCF

Prayer Meetings and Bible Studies

The Christian life is that which cannot be sustained without prayer. This is why Jesus often woke up early and went to a solitary place to pray. The apostles gave themselves to prayer always and the ministry of the word underscoring the importance of the activities in their life and ministry (Acts 6:2) The saying in Christendom that "as water is essential to a fish for survival, so is prayer very essential to a Christian" if he/she must survive in this perverse and crooked generation as an adherent of the faith in Christ Jesus. Prayer is like the air that living things breathe to stay alive. This underscores why NCCF do not take it with levity. Ma'ori (2019) on the subject of praying without ceasing averred that prayer is imperative in that it builds our faith as well as enhances our spiritual stamina for the spiritual race that is marked out for us Christians. Ma'ori further averred that prayer is the art of speaking with God. Got Questions (2022), maintains that the most basic definition of prayer is "talking to God" and that it is not meditation or passive reflection. It is a direct address to God. It is the communication of the human soul with the Lord who created the soul. Adalbert (2024), description of prayer is that it is an act of communication by humans with the sacred or Holy-God, the gods, the transcendent realm, or supernatural powers. Found in every religion at all times, it may be a corporate or personal act using different forms and techniques. Adalbert further quoted Sadhu Sundar Singh, a modern Christian mystic of India, who said that "praying is as important as breathing." And that, of the various forms of religious literature, prayer is considered by many to be the purest in expressing the essential elements of a religion. According to Alechenu (2019), prayer is one of the cardinal points of NCCF in that it is carried out at the national, state, zonal and sub-zonal

levels. The NCCF national, state and zonal prayer conferences, alongside weekly prayer meetings, are avenues that the fellowship commune with God on behalf of the nation, host communities and itself for peace, unity, progress, among others.

The Bible is a written document that contains God's will. It is the book that carries the laws/constitution that governs operation in God's kingdom, having promises, duties, rights/privileges obtainable in the kingdom from the monarch of the kingdom (God) and His subjects (believers, born again Christians). This underscores the need for Christians to read, study this "book of the law" (Bible) in other to understand or know the will of God for application in all ramifications of life (Joshua 1:8). According to Ma'ori (2019), the Bible (Word of God) is the food that a man's soul need for survival in that it provides nourishment for man's soul as well as promotes its wellbeing, hence, the need to study the Bible always and apply it in every facets of ones endeaveavour to grow in faith as spiritual adults in Christ Jesus. For NCCF, it is an imperative aspect of the fellowship in that the priority given to it attests to it as reflected in its weekly activities. The fellowship has realized that the study of the word of God can help in curtailing error and misinterpretation of the scripture in Christendom. Jesus said "…you are wrong because you know neither the scriptures…" (Mathew 22:29). Apostle Paul instructed to "…devote yourself to public reading of scripture, to exhortation, to teaching…Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (1 Timothy 4:13, 2 Timothy 2:5). According to Kelsey (2024), a Bible study activity is a time set aside to strive to understand the words of the Bible. Christians, as well as those who wish to learn more about Jesus Christ, take part in Bible studies so as to enable them learn more about God and the words He spoke in the Bible. It can be done individually or collectively (group), being a time of analysis of the most popular book in the world.

Impediments to Fellowship/Church Activities

Every good endeavour often experiences one challenge or another that seeks to undermine such good efforts. The church, as well as the NCCF is not exempt from life's challenges. It is part and parcel of the things one will encounter in the pilgrimage to heaven. Jesus the founder of the church made it explicitly clear that "in this world, you will have troubles (challenges), but be of good cheer for I have overcome the world…for whatsoever is born of God, overcomes the world and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith (John 16:13, 1 John 4:5). Thus, challenges are impediments to the actualization of a desired/set goal in life endeavours. According to Merriam Webster Dictionary (2024), impediment implies making forward progress difficult by clogging, hampering, or fettering. It is to interfere with or slow the progress of something. Also, one can aver that it is something that makes it difficult to do or complete a task or assignment, which interferes with movement or progress. Impediments could be social, economic, moral/spiritual, physical or psychological.

Social impediments have to do with insecurity, language barrier, curfew, denial of expression of thoughts, denial of association and many more. The social issues, especially insecurity that confronts corps members nowadays in Nigeria, are so glaring that some even do not want to go to the states they are deployed to; rather, they redeploy to some safer states/LGAs. This was not so before the emergence of insurgency, banditry, kidnapping and so forth. In fact, it is in view of such challenges that Adeyemi (2019), posits that Christian corpers should stay among brethren and adhere to the advice of the security personnels in case of insecurity due to activities of terrorists, bandits, unknown gunmen, hoodlums, political thugs, *et cetera*. They should resist the temptation of running about and stay safe. On the issue of language barrier, Adeyemi further enjoined Christian corps members to learn the 'lingua franca' of the northern part of Nigeria -Hausa or any other acceptable language or means of communication being used by the inhabitants of the place they are deployed to serve. Also, they should wear their traditional clothes once in a while, as well as cultivate the art of eating their local food, in that such mind set is a cross-cultural one. Such acts have the tendency of creating a mindset of love for the unreached. Love can win anybody.

On the physical, spiritual and economic aspects, Asake (2016) maintained that church attendance and membership in many of the churches have decreased in most northern states but increased in the middle belt states, where many Christians have relocated to, consequent upon persecution, insecurity caused by ethno-religious conflicts, Fulani herders and farmers' conflicts, among others. Also, the church in society is on a downward move in its influence and resources as a result of the increase in poverty. Many Christians are developing negative feelings towards Muslims, consequent upon persistent violence. In the same vein, Jegede and Kalla (2023) opined that the continued state of insecurity in the country, constitute a threat to the fabric of national integration (which NYSC seek to achieve) in the country, pointing out that it has succeeded in creating an atmosphere of fear, anxiety, disquiet and mutual distrust among Nigerians and it is synonymous to Shehu (2024) assertion that insurgency in the North-East is an existential threat to the nation.

Research Methodology

A descriptive research design of survey type was adopted in this study. The target population was all NCCF members in the Northeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was used in which the sample size of 795, that is, 50% of the 1587 study population, emerged through a proportionate stratified sampling technique emerged. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and oral interview schedule. Analysis of the collected data (606 filled questionnaires, that is, 76.2%) was with the statistical tool of frequency, percentage, mean scores and t-test using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) IBM version 26. The benchmark for decision-making mean concerning the answering of the research questions stood at ≥ 2.50 as agreed, while mean values less than 2.50 were disagreed. The independent samples t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance. The interview that was conducted on 18 past and present leaders and the findings complemented the questionnaire findings.

Results and Discussion

Results

The filled, returned and analyzed copies of the questionnaire were used to answer the research question and hypothesis raised for the study. Research Question One, which states that:" What is the impact of insecurity on NCCF prayer meeting in Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria?", items 1 to 7 of Table 01 answer the research question.

Table 01: Impact of Insecurity on NCCF Members' Prayer Meetings

S/No.	ITEM	Response SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	The insecurity in northeast overwhelms NCCF members that they become worried/anxious and don't pray or attend prayer meetings as the Bible encourages.	48	143	191	224	2.02	0.96	Disagree
2	Fear of being attacked, injured or killed during prayer meetings discourages attendance/participation from corpers.	69	161	222	154	2.24	0.96	Disagree
3	Dusk to dawn curfew due to insecurity in northeast makes it impossible for those residing outside family house/lodge to participate in prayer meetings.	131	268	150	57	2.78	0.89	Agree
4	Instead of praying for the salvation of perpetrators of insecurity in northeast, NCCF hate them and pray for them to die or be destroyed by God.	22	39	157	388	1.50	0.77	Disagree
5	Hatred and prayers for ones enemies to die or be destroyed do not hinder prayers	38	101	206	261	1.86	0.91	Disagree
6	Organizing prayer conferences and vigils by NCCF has been suspended or not consistent due to insecurity in northeast	60	153	209	184	2.15	0.97	Disagree
7	Some corpers have resorted to carrying charms, amulets and other unchristian means of protection in place of praying to God for protection and obeying laid down security tips/measures in the face of insecurity.	18	77	186	325	1.65	0.81	Disagree
	Cumulative					**2.03**	**1.05**	

Benchmark: Mean ≥ 2.50 = Agree; Mean < 2.50 = Disagree

In the aspect of the Nigeria Christian Corps Fellowship (NCCF) prayer meetings, the influence of the prevailing insecurity cannot be overstated. These gatherings, which traditionally serve as a source of spiritual edification and community bonding, are increasingly challenged by threats to safety and security. Table 01 revealed that mean values ranging from 1.50 to 2.78 were obtained from the items. The cumulative mean responses obtained for all the items were 2.13 and a standard deviation of 0.91, which is less than the benchmark mean of 2.50, implying that their responses were negative and in turn disagreed with the items.

Out of the 7 items on the impact of insecurity on NCCF prayer meeting, only item (3) which states that dusk to dawn curfew due to insecurity in northeast makes it impossible for those residing outside family house/lodge to participate in prayer meetings was agreed to and it attracted a positive response of mean score of 2.78, which is greater than the benchmark mean of 2.50 while the remaining items had mean values less than 2.50. Details revealed that 399 individuals consented to the item, while 207 respondents disagreed with the item.

On the other hand, Item (4), which states that instead of praying for the salvation of perpetrators of insecurity in the northeast, NCCF hate them and pray for them to die or be destroyed by God, was disagreed with, attracting the least response of 1.50 with details showing that only 61 individuals agreed to the statement, while 545 respondents disagreed to the item. This implies that NCCF members generally reject the notion of harboring hatred toward perpetrators of insecurity or praying for their destruction. Instead, the result suggests that members upheld the fellowship's spiritual and moral values by choosing to pray for the salvation and transformation of those responsible for violence in the North-East

The cumulative mean response of 2.03 is an indication that insecurity adversely affects NCCF prayer meetings, suggesting that restrictions like curfews can disrupt social and community functions and illustrates a collective perspective among NCCF members that favours compassion over condemnation. This finding reveals an understanding of the group's spiritual beliefs, indicating that they resist the temptation to resort to animosity and instead focus on praying for the salvation of offenders. This stance against wishing harm upon others is critical to the psychological and community health of the group, as it promotes resilience and solidarity in the face of adversities.

Research Question Two: What is the impact of insecurity on the NCCF Bible studies programme in the Northeast Geopolitical zone, Nigeria? Responses concerning the impact of insecurity on NCCF Bible studies in Northeast Geopolitical Zone, as obtained from the research questionnaire, are presented in Table 02.

Table 02: Impact of Insecurity on Bible Studies among NCCF Members

S/No.	ITEM	Response					Std.	
		SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Dev.	Remarks
8	Insecurity does not in any way constitute a barrier to NCCF Bible study activity in the Northeast.	148	215	175	68	2.73	0.95	Agree
9	Insecurity produces worry, anxiety as well as fear among corps members which affects attendance for Bible Study in the northeast.	86	251	191	78	2.57	0.89	Agree
10	Fear of been attacked during fellowship (Bible study) due to insecurity does not affect NCCF members attendance, concentration, understanding and active contribution in the activity at all.	102	209	221	74	2.56	0.91	Agree
11	Bible studies attendance in NCCF have reduced and no longer given its rightful place in the fellowship due to insecurity in northeast.	61	121	281	143	2.17	0.90	Disagree
12	NCCF members residing outside the family house/lodge find it difficult to attend Bible studies due to insecurity and don't attend totally when curfew is imposed in the land.	101	255	168	82	2.62	0.92	Agree
	Cumulative					**2.53**	**0.91**	

Benchmark: Mean ≥ 2.50 = Agree; Mean < 2.50 = Disagree

The issue of insecurity in the Northeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria significantly impacts community-based initiatives, particularly faith-based organizations like the NCCF (Nigerian Christian Corper's Fellowship) involved in Bible study programs. The region is deeply affected by the violent activities of insurgent groups, resulting in severe degradation of social structures and an escalation in violence that threatens individual safety and inhibits the effective delivery of religious and educational programs. Participants may experience heightened anxiety and fear, which can restrict their ability to engage meaningfully with religious teachings and community activities. Table 02, which sought to find out the impact of insecurity on Bible studies, revealed that the mean values from the items ranged from 2.17 to 2.73. The overall cumulative mean response across all items was found to be 2.53, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.91. This cumulative mean is significantly higher

than the established benchmark mean of 2.50, which suggests that the respondents' collective feedback is both substantial and indicates a general agreement with the items presented in the survey.

Specifically, it is noteworthy that the item pertaining to insecurity does not in any way constitute a barrier to NCCF Bible study activity in the Northeast garnered the highest mean response of 2.73 with a standard deviation of 0.95. Detailed analysis reveals that out of the total participants, 363 individuals agreed with this assertion, while 243 respondents disagreed. This highlights the resilience of NCCF's spiritual programming, demonstrating that fellowship activities, especially Bible studies, remain a stabilizing and essential part of members' routines even amidst insecurity.

Conversely, item 11, which posited that Bible study attendance in NCCF has reduced and no longer given its rightful place in the fellowship due to insecurity in the Northeast, reported the lowest mean response of 2.17 and a standard deviation of 0.90, with details showing that 182 respondents agreed with the item, while 424 respondents disagreed. The finding strongly suggests that Bible study continues to retain its relevance and priority within the fellowship despite the security challenges in the Northeast. This implies that NCCF members demonstrate considerable resilience and commitment to spiritual activities even under conditions of threat.

The aggregate mean response of 2.53 indicates that insecurity impedes Bible studies among NCCF members in Northeast Nigeria, suggesting that NCCF members in Northeast Nigeria genuinely feel that insecurity is interfering with their ability to attend and participate in Bible studies. This means that many members are likely skipping meetings because they fear for their safety, or they cannot travel freely due to the security situation. In practical terms, this implies that Bible study groups are being disrupted, either fewer meetings are held, attendance is lower, or meetings are shorter and less engaging because of the fear of attacks. Over time, this could weaken fellowship, reduce members' spiritual growth, and even discourage new members from joining.

Null Hypothesis Testing

HO_1: There is no significant difference in the opinions of married and unmarried respondents on the impact of insecurity on NCCF prayer meetings in the Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria.

To test null hypothesis one, the responses from married and unmarried NCCF members were subjected to an independent samples t-test. The result is shown in Table 03.

Table 03: t-test on the Difference in the Opinions of Married and Unmarried Respondents on the Impact of Insecurity on NCCF Prayer Meetings in Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	S.D	Df	t-cal	t-crit	*P*	Remark
Married	13	16.23	2.94					
Unmarried	593	14.16	3.75	604	1.98	1.98	0.05	Sig.

Significant at P≤0.05

The findings from the independent samples t-test in Table 03 indicates that there is a significant difference between the opinions of married and unmarried respondents on the impact of insecurity on NCCF prayer meetings in the Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria. This is because the calculated p-value of 0.05 is equal to the 0.05 level of significance set for retention or rejection of the hypothesis, also a calculated t-value of 1.98 is equal to the critical value of 1.98. As a result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the opinions of married and unmarried respondents on the impact of insecurity on NCCF prayer meetings in the Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria is rejected, implying that the opinions of married and unmarried respondents are different concerning the impact of insecurity on NCCF prayer meetings in the Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria.

HO_2: There is no significant difference in opinions of southern corpers and northern corpers respondents on the impact of insecurity on the NCCF Bible studies programme in the Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria.

To test null hypothesis two, the responses from southern and northern NCCF members were subjected to an independent samples t-test. The result is shown in Table 04.

Table 04: t-test on the Difference in the Opinions of Southern and Northern Corpers on the Impact of Insecurity on NCCF Bible Studies in the Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	S.D	Df	t-cal	t-crit	*P*	Remark
Southern Corpers	266	12.55	1.92					
Northern Corpers	340	12.71	1.94	604	1.02	1.98	0.31	Not Sig.

Not Significant at P>0.05

The findings from the independent samples t-test in Table 04 revealed that there is no significant difference between the opinions of southern corpers and northern corpers on the impact of insecurity on NCCF Bible studies programme in the Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria. This is because the calculated p-value of 0.31 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance set for retention or rejection of the hypothesis, also a calculated t-value of 1.02 is less than the critical value of 1.98. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in opinions of southern corpers and northern corpers on the impact of insecurity on NCCF Bible studies programme in the Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria is retained, implying that the opinion of both southern and northern Corp members is comparable with regards to the impact of insecurity on NCCF Bible studies in the Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria.

Summary of Findings

The following is the summary of the study findings:

1. Differences exist between the opinions of married and unmarried respondents on the impact of insecurity on NCCF prayer meetings in the Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria because dusk to dawn curfew due to insecurity in northeast made it impossible for those residing outside family houses/lodge to participate in prayer meetings.
2. Southern and northern Corp members in the study area had the same belief with regards to the impact of insecurity on NCCF Bible studies in the Northeast Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria which is not unconnected with the fact that insecurity produces worry, anxiety as well as fear among corps members which affects attendance for Bible Study in the northeast.

Discussion of Result

Regarding the impact of insecurity on prayer meeting activity of NCCF in the Northeast Geopolitical zone, Nigeria, the study revealed that respondents' view were significantly different. The majority of the respondents held the view that, despite the security challenge in the region, NCCF corps members still pray, holding the activity as scheduled, as well as the prayer conferences. Their opinions concurs with Alechenu (2019) that prayer conferences, weekly prayer meetings were held as planned and in such gatherings, members were enjoined to cast their burdens on Jesus Christ, for He cares for them. The study revealed that it is only when there was a curfew, corpers dwelling outside the family house, could not attend prayer meetings.

Also, it was obvious that the fellowship members did not hate and pray for the death of their enemies, that is, perpetrators of the societal conflict in the region, but pray for their salvation/repentance, and change from doing such evil. The members of NCCF did not resort to syncretism by using charms or amulets as means of protection from becoming victims of insecurity attacks, but they put their trust in God to protect and keep them safe, as well as obeying already established security guidelines by NYSC, security agencies, among others. This finding underscores that their attitude is in alignment with the Biblical injunction to all Christians as recorded in 1 Thessalonians 5:14-17; Psalms 118:6-9, Mathew 5:43-48 that Christians should pray at all times…it is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes…love your enemies…pray for them that persecute you.

Furthermore, on 19/08/2025, one of the past NCCF state chairmen of the Borno chapter revealed in an interview that during his tenure (2022/2023 spiritual session), prayer meetings were vital part of the fellowship, insecurity influenced how and when the meetings were held. Unlike in other regions where vigils and late-night prayer sessions are common, they had to limit their meetings to safer hours. In the same vein, a female current leader of the sisters, interviewed on 26/07/2025 posits that they in the Borno state chapter family house normally hold their prayer meetings without any security challenge, however, it was only their members that resides in lodges other than the family house that have been facing challenges due to persecution from the lodges coordinators (non corp members). By this, one can aver that despite the challenges, they still made time to observe this vital activity, as Ma'ori (2019) affirmed, prayer is imperative, for it builds our faith as well as enhances our spiritual stamina for the success of the race marked for us Christians.

Concerning Bible study, the findings underscored ample collective feedback from the respondents, pointing out a general concord with the items presented in the survey. Specifically, the study revealed that insecurity has a way of affecting members emotionally, spiritually, psychologically, mentally, and morally, such that their disposition towards coming together to study the word of God or any other activity is undesirable. Insecurity makes members to be afraid of attending or participating in the study in order not to be attacked, injured, kidnapped, or even killed during such activity. This finding is in agreement with Jegede and Kalla (2023) statement that the continued state of insecurity in the country, constitute a threat to the fabric of national integration (which NYSC seek to achieve) in the country, pointing out that it has succeeded in creating an atmosphere of fear, anxiety, disquiet and mutual distrust among Nigerians, just like Shehu (2024) pointed out

that insurgency in the North-East is an existential threat to the nation. The issue of members' reduction in attendance due to insecurity concurs with Asake's (2016) claim that membership and attendance have decreased in many churches in most Northern states.

On the 31 May 2025, the researcher had an interview with the Assistant General Secretary of NCCF Bauchi state chapter and gathered that insecurity has negatively affected Bible study and the fellowship generally in one of the zones/local government areas, she oversees, but it did not stop their activities from holding entirely. She pointed out that they ignore the persecution they were encountering and still attend the Bible study. However, some could not bear it and resorted to redeployment to other safer places. Her assertion validates Asake's (2016) submission that the number of Christians in the Middle-Belt has increased because many of them relocated to the zone because of persecution and insecurity triggered by ethno-religious conflicts, Fulani herders and farmers' conflicts.

In his view on 19 August 2025, the past chairman of NCCF, Borno State for 2022/2023 spiritual session averred that Bible studies, though consistent, was also affected by insecurity in that attendance was usually lower than expected because members were afraid of moving around late in the evenings. He added that some corpers residing in distant lodges were also discouraged from participating fully, as insecurity made night movement unsafe. Although they continued the activity weekly, it was robbed of the richness that can be derived from interaction and participation that they would have enjoyed in a more peaceful environment. Shehu (2024), says that nothing thrives in a chaotic atmosphere, a place that is void of peace and the likes, agrees with the earlier-mentioned statement made by the former Borno State chairman of NCCF. It depicts that peace and security of human lives and property is imperative in any society or nation if meaningful growth and development of human and material resources will be attained in any facets of life – religiously, economically, academically, socially, to mention a few.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is therefore concluded that NCCF reach was curtailed by restrictions that limit members' participation in activities. Poor attendance during prayer meetings was due to reasons such as curfew imposed to restrict movement, and that it was beyond members' control, especially those residing outside the family lodge/house. Also, emotional instability associated with fear among NCCF members, dissuaded them from attending Bible Study because of these security challenges.

Recommendations

The following Recommendations were made with respect to the study findings and conclusion:

1. The NCCF in the family houses should resort to doing live streaming of the prayer meetings and Bible study activity, state and prayer conferences with social media platforms (facebook, whatsapp, zoom, google meeting/conference) whenever there are things like curfew that restricts movement of persons so that members living outside the family house can partake in such activities from their safe haven and even give their offerings through online transfer channels.
2. Members of NCCF who are discouraged emotionally from attending activities due to worries and anxiety should be visited and encouraged often by leaders or other emotionally stable members.
3. Cell houses should be set up for Bible study and prayer meetings at various corpers lodges so that those NCCF members staying outside the family house can easily come together to have fellowship when they cannot get to the family house for fellowship in times when there is curfew or security challenges that may not allow them to get to the family house for such activities.

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The Challenges Of Rural Infrastructural Development In Plateau State And The Strategies Adopted By The Political Leadership, 2015-2023

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Abstract
The issue of the impact of political leadership on rural infrastructural development in Plateau State has remained unresolved. The purpose of this study is to examine the strategies adopted by political leadership and the challenges that confronted it in enhancing rural infrastructural development in the State. The study was anchored on the structural-functional theory to understand the relationship between political leadership and rural infrastructural development in Plateau State. The study population consisted of 11,977 individuals. This comprised 6 local government areas, 2 from each of the 3 Senatorial Districts in Plateau State. This covered Plateau North, Plateau South and Plateau Central Senatorial Districts. Using the Rakesh sample size formula, the sample size was 400 respondents. Data for the study were collected from primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were collected from a 5-Point Likert Questionnaire and in-depth interview, while secondary data were collected from journals and internet materials. Data from the questionnaire were analysed using simple percentages, absolute frequencies, and weighted average, while data from in-depth interview were analysed using a narrative-analytic technique. Data from secondary sources were analysed using a narrative-analytic technique. The major findings of the study included: political apprenticeship as well as adoption of a democratic leadership style by the Plateau State Government did not largely enhance rural infrastructural development in the State. This is because the democratic processes and institutions failed to live up to their respective expectations. Furthermore, corruption, a lack of political will/capacity, and insecurity are among the challenges confronting the use of political leadership in enhancing rural infrastructural development in the State. Among other things, it was recommended that, given that the strategies adopted by the political leadership are inadequate in enhancing rural infrastructural development in the State, the Government should collaborate with traditional rulers and religious leaders in implementing rural development projects in the State. This would also ensure that the execution of the projects is not compromised.
Keywords: Leadership, political leadership, rural areas, rural infrastructure, development

Introduction

The development of any nation depends on its rural communities, which have an abundance of resources that, if used wisely, can serve as both a foundation and a springboard for structural changes that will lead to economic growth and the development of both the people and the nation. However, despite methods being used to extract wealth from these rural communities in Nigeria, it seems that not much is being done to use these natural resources to bring about the transformation of the infrastructural growth and development of the rural areas. Rural infrastructural development is said to be a crucial element of the approaches implemented globally for the socio-economic transformation of any nation, particularly developing countries like Nigeria (Anyanwu, 1992). It is known that rural communities possess a wealth of people and material resources that may quicken a nation's growth. For example, it is stated that most people live in rural villages in Nigeria. According to Ozor and Nwankwo (2008), around 80% of Nigerians live in rural areas. Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka (2013), assert that the nation's rural areas serve as both a primary market for local manufacturers and a key source of capital formation. According to Abah (2010), the main economic activities carried out by rural communities, such as farming, form the basis for the nation's economic development. The informal sector, which is the cornerstone of each emerging economy's fundamental economic development, flourishes in rural regions without being recognized or included in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Nonetheless, it is evident that rural communities, particularly those in Plateau State, have been neglected, despite their significance to the growth and development of the state. They are glaringly impoverished, and poverty is still rampant. The absence of "the mastery of the practical wisdom (leadership) and technology to

mobilize them for the overall benefit" has prevented most communities from recording any significant rural development (Ozor & Nwankwo, 2008).

The Statement of Research Problem

The rural areas of Plateau State face significant challenges in accessing basic infrastructure such as rural roads, healthcare facilities, rural electricity, schools, and clean water, which hinders economic development and perpetuates poverty. This study aims to examine the impact of political leadership on rural infrastructural development in Plateau State, exploring how leadership style, policies, and government structures influence the provision and maintenance of rural infrastructure, and identifying best practices for effective leadership in addressing the infrastructure needs of the rural communities in the state. This study, therefore, examines the strategies adopted in addressing the specific role of the Plateau state government between 2015 and 2023, as it relates to rural infrastructural development needs and challenges in the state.

Research Questions

Based on the foregoing, the following questions are found relevant in the study:

i. What are the strategies adopted by the political leadership in enhancing rural infrastructural development in the State?

ii. What are the challenges faced by the political leadership in the state in its quest for rural infrastructural development?

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the impact of the political leadership of Plateau State Government on rural infrastructural development in State. However, specific objectives are as follows:

i. To assess the strategies adopted by the political leadership in enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State; and
ii. To identify the challenges confronting the political leadership in enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State.

Research Propositions

The following research propositions are relevant in this study:

i. The political leadership was not deliberate about the implementation of its policies and effective consultation as strategies for rural infrastructural development in Plateau State.
ii. Corruption as well as ineffective political will/capacity and insecurity, are among the challenges confronting the use of political leadership in enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State.

Conceptual Framework

Leadership

The fact is that defining leadership is a relatively recent academic endeavor. It is also replete with paradoxes (Bolden, Witzel, & Linacre, 2016). This is because, according to Gosling et al. (2012, p.1), "there is no one-dimensional view of leadership," meaning that there is not a definition of leadership that is accepted by everybody.

Though the foregoing definition of leadership presented a robust background to the understanding of the nature of the concept, it did not capture the meaning of leadership as regards spurring people to action, which is needed in this study.

Leadership means looking beyond the day-to-day management of people to developing strategy, inspiring and motivating the collective, and making critical decisions" (Riggio, 2017, p. 277). According to Rosenbach, Taylor, and Youndt (2018), leadership is all about getting people to work together to make things happen that might not otherwise occur or to prevent things from happening that would ordinarily take place, while Bratton (2020, p. 16), defined it as "an influencing process occurring both directly and indirectly among others within for-mal employment relations." The foregoing definitions of leadership is important in this study because it shows the relationship between leadership and actions and inaction of the people, which is needed in the understanding of the connection between leadership and rural infrastructural development, which is the focus of this study. Nonetheless, the definitions did not show the significance of leadership in making the people accomplish their tasks, which may lead to development in rural areas.

Individuals implement the notion of leadership in both their personal and professional lives. The individuals must get an awareness of the significance and meaning of leadership in order to use this notion in an efficient and valuable way. They will put this idea into practice after they comprehend its significance and how it will help them fulfill their job responsibilities and accomplish their objectives. The primary purpose of leaders is to enable their subordinates to accomplish the intended goals and objectives by giving them the necessary information, support, and guidance while they do their job obligations in a systematic and orderly manner (Kapur, 2020). Though the definition of leadership by Kapur, shows a connection between leadership and the realization of organizational objectives, which is pertinent to this study. However, it does not cover the ingredients of leadership that can spur rural infrastructural development.

Rural Infrastructure

Rural areas are perceived as large and isolated areas of an open country with low population density. Rural areas can be defined as where majority of the inhabitants are engaged in agricultural production as primary industry in cooperation with nature. Rural areas are sometimes characterized by a small population (Economic Research Service, US Department of Agriculture, 2013), but this did not cover the issue of the basis for categorization of the concept of "rural", which is needed in this study.

According to Putri, Russell, O'Sulivan, Meiala, and Kippen (2022), rural areas are defined based on topography, access or distance to urban facilities, agricultural landscape, or population density. Rural areas can equally be categorised based on agricultural land use, population density, and distance or travel times from urban centers, the extent of geographic isolation, or possessing a country-like environment. Though the foregoing is needed in this study for understanding of the nature of rural areas and how that can lead to the leadership recruitment with its implications for rural infrastructural development in Plateau State, it did not cover many other factors that affect the rural setting which may exert more influence on leadership and rural infrastructural development, which is needed in this study.

Rural infrastructure, in this study, refers to the building of projects like roads, bridges, rural power supply, and clean sources of water supply, and healthcare facilities that improve people's quality of life and sense of security amongst the residents of rural communities in Plateau State.

Ekong (1988) notes that rural development can be measured by assessing the nature of roads, water supply, electricity, housing, and access to education, improved healthcare in rural communities and enhanced food security in rural areas. This shows that rural development seeks to achieve development in rural settings. However, the foregoing did not lay bare justification for rural development in Plateau State.

Rural development is a method for enhancing the social and economic circumstances of disadvantaged rural residents. According to what has been said so far, rural development is a development that makes it possible for the impoverished people living in rural areas to gain from

From the foregoing, rural development is defined, in this study, as an aggressive strategy that involves all facets of the populace and focuses on accelerating their social and economic changes in rural areas of Plateau State with a view to ensuring availability of portable water, rural roads network and rural power supply through the instrumentality of effective political leadership. For rural development to have any significance, the rural areas must be accepted or restructured to allow for maximum growth. From the foregoing, rural development entails improving sustainable means of subsistence, particularly for disadvantaged populations, who ultimately receive development aid.

Empirical Review

Strategies adopted by Political Leadership for enhancing Rural Infrastructural Development

Ugboh and Tibi (2023) examined the strategies of integrated rural development adopted by communities in Delta State. The purpose of this study was to highlight the integrated rural development strategies adopted by communities in ensuring rural development in Delta State. Data for the study were collected from secondary sources and analysed using content analysis. Findings from the study, among other things, showed that the application of rural development strategies such as the bottom-up model, self-help approach, self-reliant growth point model, authoritarian handout and integrated rural development models brought about an increase in the delivery of developmental projects like town halls and market halls. However, the findings did not show the strategies adopted in ensuring that political leadership of the Plateau State Government is used as a tool for enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State, which is the focus of this study.

Shut (2014) evaluated rural development strategies in Plateau State between 1999 and 2010. The purpose of the study was to find out if the strategies to rural development adopted by the Plateau State government retarded or promoted rural development in the State. Data for the study were collected from both primary and secondary

sources. Primary data collected were analysed using a simple percentage table and chi square, while secondary data were analysed using content analysis. Findings from the study showed that state allocations to rural development in the yearly budget are not up to 1% of the total budget, and the 3 selected rural development agencies have not impacted positively on rural development in Plateau State. Findings also showed that beneficiaries of rural development are not involved in programmes initiation and implementation in Plateau State. Among other things, it is recommended that there should be involvement of beneficiaries of rural development programmes in the process of initiation/conception and implementation of rural development projects, but this did not assess the strategies adopted in ensuring that political leadership role especially of the Plateau State Government is used as a tool for enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State from 2015 to 2023, which is the focus of this study.

Kapur (2019) studied rural development approaches and strategies. The purpose of the study was to understand the approaches and strategies that are necessary in bringing about the development of rural communities. Data for the study were collected from secondary sources and analysed using qualitative methods. Findings from the study showed that strategies of rural development include multi-purpose strategy, growth-oriented strategy, target group strategy, and area development strategy, among others. Among other things, it is recommended that overall rural environmental conditions lead to the effective growth and development of individuals and communities. Nevertheless, the study by Kapur did not assess the strategies adopted in ensuring that the political leadership of the Plateau State Government is used as a tool for enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State, which is one of the objectives of this study.

Dahiru and Modibbo (2021) studied effective leadership and sustainable development in Nigeria through an assessment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in Northeastern Nigeria. Data for the study were collected using structured questionnaires and interviews, while secondary data were obtained from relevant literature, including seminar papers, annual reports, and journals, among others. The study areas covered Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe States. Primary data collected were analysed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and regression models, while data from secondary sources were analysed using content analysis and gap analysis. Findings showed that sustainable development will produce a better future for Nigerians. It is recommended, among other things, that there is a need to have zealous and passionate leaders who are determined to bring development, while the populace should embrace technological knowhow. However, the findings did not cover how leadership role especially of the Plateau State Government, can be used to enhance rural infrastructural development in Plateau State.

Ikenga and Chima (2021) examined the fundamentals of good governance as a panacea for development performance in Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to investigate how progress from bad to good governance and from weak to strong development performance in Nigeria. Data for the study were collected from secondary sources and analysed using content analysis. Findings from the study showed, among other things, that governance issues are the bane of development performance in Nigeria. Among other things, good governance and strong development performance are recommended for effective service delivery and administrative competence in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the study by Ikenga and Chima did not assess the strategies adopted in ensuring that the political leadership role, especially of the Plateau State Government, is used as a tool for enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State, which created a gap in this area of the study.

Challenges confronting Political Leadership in enhancing Rural Infrastructural Development

Danladi (2013) studied leadership and socio-economic challenges in Nigeria. Data for the study were collected from secondary sources and analysed using content analysis. Findings from the study, among other things, showed that the political class in Nigeria is not engaged in any form of production of goods, which led to infrastructural breakdown in the areas of bad roads, a non-functional railway system, and a dysfunctional water transportation system, among others. It is recommended, among other things, that Nigerian leadership must seek legitimacy from the people as well as seek their collective consent rather than the phenomenon where government is imposed by force and threats. However, the foregoing did not identify the challenges confronting the use of political leadership style, especially by the Plateau State Government, in enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State, which is the focus of this study.

Kari, Ogbu, and Ereke (2019) investigated the challenges of infrastructural development in Nigeria through an assessment of its pains and gains. The purpose of the study was to dissect the state of infrastructural development in the Nigerian context. The study was anchored on the structural-functional theory. Data for the study were collected from secondary sources and analysed using content analysis. Findings from the study showed that infrastructure in Nigeria is a function of perpetual neglect by state actors. It is recommended, among other things, that the government needs to drive economic diversification as well as structural changes as

alternative means of creating revenue to defray the cost of building infrastructure. Though the findings by Kari, *et al.* (2019) cover the challenges of infrastructural development in Nigeria, it did not identify the challenges confronting the use of political leadership style by the Plateau State Government in enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State.

Maiyeri, Bin, and Liu (2022) investigated the challenges facing infrastructural development and quality education in Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to examine the challenges facing the educational system in Nigeria in terms of infrastructural facilities and development of these factors, and proffers some remedies, such as the challenges in the Nigerian educational systems. Data for the study were collected from secondary sources and analysed using content analysis. Findings from the study showed that there is no significant difference in infrastructural development between federal and state universities. Among other things, it is recommended that the government increase funding for the development of infrastructures, but this did not identify the challenges confronting the use of political leadership and policies in enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State.

Imhonopi and Ugochukwu (2023) examined the leadership crisis and corruption in the Nigerian public sector as an albatross of national development. Data for the study were collected from secondary sources and analysed using qualitative methods. The study found that the albatross to national development in Nigeria as a spin-off of the leadership crisis and corruption prevalent in its public sector. However, the findings did not show the challenges confronting the use of political leadership style, especially of the Plateau State Government in enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State.

Anazodo, Igbokwe-Ibeto, and Nka (2015) examined leadership, corruption, and governance in Nigeria, focusing on issues and categorical imperatives. The study was anchored on the eclectic approach. Data for the study were collected from secondary sources and analysed using content analysis. Findings from the study, among other things, showed that leadership, corruption, and bad governance are the bane of development in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the study did not identify the challenges confronting the use of political leadership style in enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State, which created a gap in this area of the study.

Theoretical Framework: Structural Functional Theory

The origins of functionalism may be traced to Aristotle's investigation of ultimate causes in nature, or activities in connection to their purposes, or utilitarianism. The foundation of Montesquieu's theory of separation of powers, which was developed in France in the 18th century, is the idea that some functions are better carried out independently of one another to ensure stability and security. Functionalism gained significance when Darwin's evolutionary theories started to shape our understanding of human behaviour. Darwin conceptualized survival in terms of functions. Every function was necessary for the system to survive. Systems that were unable to modify their operations ceased to exist. According to social Darwinists, attempts to shield the weak impeded the functioning of society, as unrestrained competition among units was beneficial to society, and functional adaptation was necessary for survival. Sociology was later affected by these concepts after anthropology.

Offer (2019) traced the history of structural-functional theory back to the 1800s and linked it to the writings of Durkheim, August Comte, and Spencer, who used biological concepts in the study of political phenomena. According to Offer, structural functionalism sees society as a multifaceted system whose interactions foster both stability and change.

The fundamental tenets of the structural functional theory, as stated by Chikendu (2002), are as follows: i. the society is made up of interconnected and interdependent structures and functions, which primarily concentrate on maintaining social equilibrium or essential transformation in the state; The social system is made up of structures and functions that are essential to guaranteeing the survival of the state; The state's structures are made to ensure that the functional needs of a system are met; And the way and manner in which societal components interact both within and outside of structures serves to reinforce and maintain the stability of the system's structures in the context of complex and dynamic systems (Potts, Vella, Dale & Sipe, 2020).

Application of the Theory to the Study

The theory is vital in understanding how institutional structures and functions performed, can enhance or diminish the capacity of political leadership in the provision of rural infrastructural facilities in the State. When the structures and functions they perform are stipulated in the constitution, and such structures and functions hinder the performance of political leadership, the provision of rural infrastructures would suffer. Therefore, Plateau state Government as an Institution is a structure within the larger society with clearly defined responsibilities and functions, including service provisions. This theory will help us in understanding whether the political leadership of the Plateau State Government from 2015 to 2023 has live up to its expectations in the

area of addressing the rural infrastructure needs of the people within the purview of the available resources accrued to the state within the period under study.

Research Methodology

The study is a descriptive research design involving survey research and historical research methods. The study population consists of 11,977 individuals. This comprises of 6 local government areas, 2 from each of the 3 Senatorial Districts in Plateau State. This covered Plateau North, Plateau South, and Plateau Central Senatorial Districts. Using the Rakesh sample size formula, the sample size was 400 respondents. Data for the study were collected from primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were collected from a 5-Point Likert Questionnaire and in-depth interview, while secondary data were collected from journals and internet materials. Data from the questionnaire were analysed using simple percentages, absolute frequencies, and weighted average, while data from in-depth interviews were analysed using a narrative-analytic technique. Data from secondary sources were analysed using a narrative analytic technique.

Findings

Findings on strategies adopted in ensuring that political leadership is used as a tool for enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State showed that majority, 173 (48.6%) of the respondents disagree that adequate consultation with the rural communities enhanced provision of portable water supply in Plateau State, while majority, 155 (43.5%) of the respondents disagree that adequate implementation of rural infrastructure policies enhanced provision of rural electricity supply in Plateau State. Also, 160 (44.9%) of the respondents strongly disagree that purposeful and effective political leadership is responsible for the provision of rural road networks in Plateau State, while 177 (49.7%) of the respondents disagree that political leadership was deliberate about the implementation of its policies as it relates to rural infrastructural development by the Plateau State Government. With a weighted average of 2.23, the statement, political apprenticeship, as well as adoption of democratic leadership style, largely enhance rural infrastructural development in Plateau State, was not accepted.

Findings from in-depth interviews on perception of strategies adopted in ensuring that political leadership is used as a tool for enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State largely support our findings from the questionnaire. Findings from in-depth interviews showed that the government adopted the strategy of budgetary allocations, releases, and oversight functions in ensuring the provision of rural infrastructures in Plateau State. In addition, findings showed that the government has interfaced with the traditional and religious institutions in the State, apart from ensuring adequate budgetary allocations for rural infrastructures in the State. Nevertheless, findings showed that the level of budgetary allocations by the government to rural infrastructural developments in Plateau State is largely inadequate in enhancing rural infrastructural development.

Findings by Shut (2014) showed that state allocations to rural development in the yearly budget is not up to 1% of the total budget, and the 3 selected rural development agencies have not impacted positively on rural development in Plateau State, which is related to the findings of this study, while findings by Kapur (2019) showed that strategies of rural development include multi-purpose strategy, growth-oriented strategy, target group strategy, area development strategy, which are not directly related to the findings of this study. Findings by Dahiru and Modibbo (2021) showed that sustainable development will produce a better future of Nigerians, which is different from the findings of this study. Findings by Ikenga and Chima (2021) showed that governance issues are the bane of development performance in Nigeria, which is equally different from the findings of this study. Therefore, based on the findings from our in-depth interview and questionnaire, we did not accept that political leadership was deliberate about the implementation of its policies as it relates to rural infrastructural development by the Plateau State Government.

Findings on challenges confronting the use of political leadership in enhancing rural Infrastructural development in Plateau State showed that majority, 153 (43%) of the respondents agree that corruption among some of those entrusted with political leadership positions hinder them from implementing rural infrastructure policies to ensure efficient water supply in Plateau State, while majority, 153 (43%) of the respondents strongly agree that lack of political will among some of those entrusted with political leadership positions hinder them from implementing rural infrastructure policies to ensure efficient transportation system in Plateau State. Majority, 159 (44.7%) of the respondents agree that nepotism in award of contracts by some of those that occupy political leadership positions pose challenge in implementing rural infrastructure policies to ensure adequate supply of electricity to rural areas in Plateau State, while majority, 164 (46.1%) of the respondents strongly agree that insecurity as well as ineffective political opposition are among the challenges confronting the use of leadership in enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State. With a weighted average of 3.94, the statement

that insecurity, as well as ineffective political opposition, are among the challenges confronting the use of leadership in enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State, was accepted.

Findings on the challenges confronting the use of political leadership in enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State showed that corruption, nepotism, use of rural development as constituency projects, ineffective monitoring and evaluations of rural projects, and political and religious considerations as the challenges confronting the use of political leadership in enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State. Also, inadequate prioritization of projects and poor budgetary releases are some of the challenges confronting the use of political leadership in enhancing rural infrastructural development in Plateau State.

Findings from previous studies are slightly related to the findings of this study. Findings by Danladi (2013) showed that the political class in Nigeria is not engaged in any form of production of goods, which led to infrastructural breakdown in the areas of bad roads, a non-functional railway system, and a dysfunctional water transportation system, which is not directly related to the findings of this study. Also, findings by Kari, Ogbu, and Ereke (2019) showed that infrastructure in Nigeria is a function of perpetual neglect by state actors, which is remotely related to the findings of this study in terms of issues covered, but differ significantly from it in terms of focus and scope of the findings. Findings by Maiyeri, Bin, and Liu (2022) showed that there is no significant difference in infrastructural development between federal and state universities, which is different from the focus of this study. Findings by Imhonopi and Ugochukwu (2023) showed that the albatross to national development in Nigeria as a spin-off of the leadership crisis and corruption prevalent in its public sector, which is related to this study in terms of focus on issues. Findings by Anazodo, Igbokwe-Ibeto, and Nka (2015) showed that leadership, corruption, and bad governance are the bane of development in Nigeria, which is also remotely related to the findings of this study. Therefore, findings from our in-depth interview, questionnaire, and some of the previous studies support the acceptance of our findings that corruption, as well as ineffective political will/capacity and insecurity, are among the challenges confronting the use of political leadership in enhancing rural infrastructural development in the State.

Discussion of Findings

i. Findings from in-depth interviews and questionnaire on strategies adopted did not enhance rural infrastructural development in Plateau state, and implementation of rural infrastructure policies was not effective due to a lack of purposeful and effective political leadership, which impacted adversely on the provision of rural road networks, water supply, and electricity in Plateau State. The political leadership by the Plateau state government was not deliberate about the implementation of its policies as it relates to rural infrastructural development in the state. This led to the non-acceptance of the assumption that political apprenticeship, as well as the adoption of democratic leadership style, largely enhanced rural infrastructural development in Plateau State.

ii. Findings from our in-depth interview and questionnaire on challenges confronting the use of political leadership in enhancing rural Infrastructural development in Plateau State showed that corruption among the political leadership positions and lack of political will were among the challenges that impede the implementation of policies on rural infrastructures in Plateau State

Conclusion

This study has been an attempt to assess the strategies and challenges of political leadership on rural infrastructural development in Plateau State from 2015 to 2023. The major findings of the study include political apprenticeship as well as adoption of a democratic leadership style by the Plateau State Government, which did not largely enhance rural infrastructural development in the State. This is because the democratic processes and institutions failed to live up to their respective expectations, and corruption as well as ineffective political will/capacity and insecurity, are among the challenges confronting the use of political leadership in enhancing rural infrastructural development in the State.

In view of the foregoing, the study concludes that the inability of the political leadership to effectively discharge its functions is largely responsible for the challenges of rural infrastructural development in Plateau State. Though the government has adopted many strategies, such as budgetary allocations, budgetary releases, and oversight functions, the challenge of rural development continued to fester in Plateau State.

Recommendations

The government should collaborate with traditional rulers and religious leaders in implementing rural development projects in the State. This would also ensure that the execution of the projects is not compromised if critical stakeholders are brought on board.

Given the challenges confronting the political leadership in enhancing rural infrastructural development in the State, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and similar organisations should adequately investigate political leaders to ensure that challenges of corruption and nepotism in the execution of rural development projects are adequately mitigated in the State.

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The Niger Delta Region Of Nigeria And The Politics Of Underdevelopment

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Abstract
The Niger Delta region of Nigeria, also known as the "cash cow of Nigeria," holds significant geopolitical and economic importance due to its vast reserves of crude oil and natural gas, contributing over 80 per cent of Nigeria's revenue. This geopolitical zone includes nine states—Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers—and is home to ethnically diverse groups such as the Ijaw, Ogoni, Itsekiri, and Urhobo. The Niger Delta region of Nigeria, rich in oil and gas resources, has been a hotspot of insecurity for decades, with profound implications for the nation's political and economic stability. These attributions stem from persistent neglect by successive governments in the region, exploitative practices by multinational oil companies, and the systemic corruption that has become the subculture in governance. The politics of underdevelopment in the Niger Delta is characterized by an imbalance in revenue allocation, poor infrastructure, high unemployment, and failed development interventions such as the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). The centralization of oil revenue, combined with a lack of political will to implement sustainable development policies, has perpetuated a cycle of poverty and discontent. This paper argued that peace and development can only be guaranteed in the Niger Delta if the major proponents of the crisis agree on the root causes of unrest and deliberately work together to address these issues through inclusive governance, environmental justice, and equitable resource distribution. This study relied on secondary data to examine the interplay between political interests and underdevelopment. The study concluded that there is a need to come up with policies that prioritize the welfare and rights of local communities in the Niger Delta.
Keywords: Niger Delta, Insecurity, Underdevelopment, Corruption, Politics.

Introduction

The situation in the Niger Delta region has gradually assumed a dangerous dimension, especially with the unfortunate infiltration of fringe groups who have been involved in hostage-taking and the demand for ransom of unsuspecting and innocent individuals, especially expatriates. The commencement of the fourth Republic in 1999 was ordinarily meant to usher in a breath of fresh air to the people of Nigeria and the Niger Delta region. To the surprise of many, the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo, within its first year in office, to be precise deployed troops to Odi, an oil-bearing community in Bayelsa, which according to available data, resulted in the death of about 2,483 persons (mainly women and children). Femi-Fani Kayode, while defending his boss, on the massacre that took place in the Odi communities in the Niger Delta, posited thus "…when we need to be hard, we have been very hard. We were very tough when it came to Odi town, where our police men and our people were killed by these ethnic militants. And the federal government went in and literally levelled the whole place." Subsequent, the federal led government has also failed in addressing the security cum developmental issues in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The state government, on their path, despite huge allocations, has also been very guilty of the ongoing crisis due to insecurity, which has affected the development of the region by deliberately financing poverty. The successive governments in the region have accumulated so much wealth while leaving the people in abject poverty and a near completely decimated environment, which has made agriculture and fishing almost a no-go area. This ugly situation has led to youth restiveness and continued struggle for the emancipation of the people of the Niger Delta.

Conceptual Clarification

Underdevelopment

The concept of underdevelopment has been defined by various scholars, but the basic characteristics include a low level of development, widespread poverty, lower level of literacy, low life expectancy, and the underutilization of resources. It is a relative concept because it compares the quality of life between the economies that be differentiated as underdeveloped and developed. The concept underscores the fact that development has been within and between hitherto known human societies. According to Walter Rodney (1972), the disparities in development between societies exist because "some groups have advanced further by producing more and becoming wealthier."

Insecurity

According to Beland (2015), insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection. It connotes an absence of peace, order, and security in a particular country or region. Achumba et al. (2013) define insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being open to, or subject to danger, or the threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague, unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. The point here is that individuals in this state of insecurity may not be fully aware of what will happen to them because of their vulnerability.

Niger Delta Region: An Overview

The Niger Delta region has continued to attract scholarly attention in view of the devastation of its environment and people due to failure to manage the negative consequences of oil exploration and development it has spawned in the region (Ighodalo, 2013). Several studies on the Niger Delta revealed several socio-economic crises such as environmental degradation, widespread unemployment, absolute poverty, and a dearth of socio-economic infrastructure, to mention a few (Dakjumbo, 2016, Banigo, 2015). The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is the storehouse of Nigeria's crude oil, which accounts for about 90 per cent of the country's revenue, and guarantees more than 90 per cent of the country's total export, providing the bulk of the centrally collected or federally collectible revenue, making the region the most central to the economic survival of the country. There seems to be much controversy regarding what constitutes the Niger Delta region of Nigeria (Ottuh, 2013). On the other hand, Otoghile and Eghweree (2010) have developed four approaches to defining the concept 'Niger Delta'. The first approach sees Niger Delta as a geographical concept otherwise known as the Niger Delta region. By this, the Niger Delta refers to the six States of the South-South, Ondo State of the South-West, as well as Imo and Abia States of South-East. The second approach sees the Niger Delta as an ethno-political concept. That is, the Niger Delta refers to the various minor ethnic nationalities with rich and interrelated cultural heritage (Kuku, 2012) in Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Bayelsa, Edo, Delta, Ondo, Imo, and Abia states. The third approach considered the Niger-Delta as an economic concept with focus on her as "the Oil Belt of Nigeria" (Saka et al, 2021, p. 323); the oil rich southern communities in Nigeria – the economic hub of the country; the proverbial goose that lays the golden eggs (Adu & Funmilayo, 2014); better still, the life wire of Nigeria's economy. The last approach looked at the Niger-Delta from an 'agitational' perspective. This approach defines the Niger-Delta as a region of insurrection (Ikelegbe, 2001); a theatre of continuous war, turmoil, or of violent and peaceful agitations for equitable distribution of oil wealth and the development of the region. Succinctly put, as an agitational concept, the Niger-Delta refers to the melting pot of resource conflict in the last two decades, as well as the utmost threat to national security and stability in recent times (Ikelegbe, 2004).

According to Francis, LaPin, and Rossiasco (2100), the Niger Delta region is characterized by a general state of underdevelopment, excessive poverty, and a lack of competent and sustainable infrastructure. The rural areas of the region are characterized by failed and abandoned development projects aimed at improving people's material living situations, but economic and social rights, such as the right to an adequate standard of living, remain unmet. Internationally known as the region with the richest petroleum reservoir, the Niger Delta is also a terrain conducive to conflicts, with the more prominent ones being the 1966 revolt, the 1990 peaceful protest, and the recent widespread militant attacks (Alao 2007). It is also home to several popular social movements and groups, including the Ijaw National Congress (INC), the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC), the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), and the Chikolo Movement (FNDIC), that have all been fighting for indigenes' rights over their natural resources in this region. Between 1976 and 2006, there were at least 7,000 oil spills in the region, affecting an area of more than 2,500 square kilometers. The long years of painful neglect and decay, coupled with unbridled exploration and exploitation of the region's oil and gas, have laid the region bare, as evidenced by large-scale wants, squalor, ignorance, disease, and idleness.

Theoretical Framework

The Frustration-Aggression Theory

The situation that has thrown the Niger Delta region of Nigeria into its current conundrum, has little or nothing to do with the claim of a break away from the Nigerian State but merely a protest against criminal neglect, marginalization, oppression and environmental degradation cum economic and socio-political hopelessness, which has gradually increased the level of frustration, in the oil bearing and contiguous communities of the Niger Delta. After due diligence, the frustration-aggression theory is best suited for the analysis of the situation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The basis of the Frustration-Aggression theory is found in the works of John Dollard (a psychologist) and his associates, in their pioneering work on the subject (Dollard et al, 1939), and in the later research work carried out by Leonard Berkowitz (1980- 89). Political Scientists who have employed this approach as a general basis for the explanation of political violence include James C. Davios, Ted Gurr, Ivo and Rosalind Feierabend, and Douglas BWY, among others (Midlarsky, 1975). Further reviews of this theory were undertaken or used in various studies by Zillman (1979), Dill and Anderson (1995), and Maire (2004), among others. This theory presents the idea of relative deprivation as a perceived disparity between value expectations and value capabilities. Or the lack of a need satisfaction defined as a gap between aspiration and achievement (MidIarsky,1975). Simply put, when there is a gap between the level of value expectation and the level of value attainment, due to lack of capability to establish a congruence between both levels, tension builds up due to the pressure of an unfulfilled aspiration or an unsatisfied urge, or need. This, when not arrested in time, leads to frustration. Frustration, when it builds up, leads to the rising of suppressed emotions of anger, which is often directed against the party considered to be the source of deprivation of satisfaction. This strong emotion finally finds an outlet through aggressive and invariably violent disposition towards the environment. Berkowitze (1988) demonstrates that men are most inclined to violence when subjected to unjustified frustration, and draws a distinction between attitudinal aggression and behavioral aggression as direct results of sustained frustration. For Gurr (1970) the potential for collective violence varies strongly with the intensity and scope of relative deprivation among members of a collectivity. If there is a significant discrepancy between what they think they deserve and what they think they will get, there is a likelihood of rebellion. Just as frustration produces aggressive behavior on the part of an individual, so does relative deprivation predict collective violence by social groups (Maire, 2004). The armed insurrection against military and civilian targets in the Niger Delta, by militant youths, directed against the government and the foreign oil companies, is viewed in this perspective. The fact that frustration invariably leads to aggression is already amply demonstrated in the Middle East by Palestinians against the State of Israel, in apartheid South Africa by the ANC and other liberation movements, and in Northern Ireland by the IRA, among so many others. One is not unmindful here of the problems and limitations of the frustration–aggression thesis, such as the fact that an aggressive response to frustration may be dependent upon the individual's level of tolerance. Or the fact that frustration need not lead to aggression or that aggression need not always be negative and violent but could also be positive and constructive. Albeit, it is an established fact that frustration does produce a temporary increase in motivation and thus leads to more vigorous responses (Bandura and Walters, 1963). And this is perceived to be of sufficient Journal of Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology in Practice Vol.1 No. 1/2 41 generality to provide a basis for the explanation of virtually all forms of aggressive behavior, including political violence. This is probably why Maire (2004) argued that "Men who are frustrated have an innate disposition to do violence to its source in proportion to the intensity of their frustration…" This is, of course, a most apposite description of the situation in the oil-bearing and contiguous communities of Nigeria's Niger Delta region**.**

Factors Sustaining Underdevelopment in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

The issues of underdevelopment in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria can be compared with the snail and the snail shell that leaves so many personalities bewildered, especially considering the massive availability of large deposits of oil in the region when compared with other oil-producing regions of the world. Neglected by successive Nigerian governments and the oil companies operating within the region, the Niger Delta has become a poor region with widespread poverty, underdevelopment, and environmental degradation (Obi 2010). What is today known as the Niger Delta crisis is a culmination and expression of pent up anger by a people from whose lands and rivers the bulk of the nation's revenue is exhumed in the form of oil and gas, which translates to billions of Petro-dollars yearly, but with the people of the area left in squalor, neglect, abject poverty and in a general state of underdevelopment (Amaechi, 2009). Thus, despite the humongous number of resources extracted from the region, it remained grossly underdeveloped. A lot of compelling reasons can be adduced as the brain behind insecurity and underdevelopment in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. These reasons include.

Colonialism: The present dichotomy in the Niger Delta cannot be extricated from colonialism, which is the favourite whipping boy of most African and Pan-African scholars. Several studies have been carried out on the Niger Delta development crisis and the forces that have subverted government efforts at development. Dike (1986) presents a historical account of the British merchants and how the colonial administrations, through their activities and policies, laid the foundation for the underdevelopment of the region. The British colonial masters, just like their counterparts elsewhere, came into Nigeria with the intention of satisfying their home needs in terms of the provision and supply of needed raw and human materials to develop the home market at the expense of the colonized country/region. Ikimi (1969) also locates the crises between the major ethnic groups in the Western Delta to the policies of the colonial state. According to Osariemen Osadolor, the guilt of colonialism did not lie in the creation "of the forces and conditions which tended to fragment the Nigerian nation state, as it was that of manipulators and exacerbation of those diverse factors which differentiated the country." The argument that follows from the foregoing is that the reaction of the people of the Niger Delta region is as a result of accumulated grievances that dates back to the pre and post-colonial era. The eventual amalgamation of the Northern and Southern areas of Nigeria in 1914 also brought about the eventual dominance of the Niger Delta by the major ethnic groups.

Poor/Bad Leadership and the Mismanagement of Oil Proceeds: The concept of leadership is one that has been variously defined by different scholars influenced by the prevailing situation or circumstance at the time. Omolayo (2005) describes leadership as an essential oil that keeps the wheel of government working without any difficulty. According to him, leadership makes the difference between success and failure in a country. It involves giving directions to citizens who are the critical assets of the nation. Leadership has been defined as a necessary phenomenon in political field (Okaneme, 2017, p.114). There is a crisis of leadership in Nigeria as a whole and the Niger Delta, in particular. This is so because, if you consider the enormous funds accruable to the region in terms of derivation, one would have expected an appreciable level of development as against what is obtainable today. Nigeria's problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to their responsibility, to the challenge of personal examples, which are the hallmark of true leadership. In discussing the current leadership situation of Nigeria, Fagbadebo (2007) stated that the Nigerian State is a victim of high-level corruption, bad governance, political instability, and a cyclical legitimacy crisis. The country's authoritarian leadership faced a legitimacy crisis, political intrigues in an ethnically differentiated polity, where ethnic competition for resources drove much of the pervasive corruption and profligacy. While the political gladiators constantly manipulated the people and the political processes to advance their own selfish agenda, society remained pauperized, and the people wallowed in abject poverty.

The Niger Delta region is currently riddled with bad governance and corruption on the part of government officials, both at the state and local government levels. This allusion is further captured by Joseph Amberkederim of the South-South Elements Progressives Union in an interview with the Daily Independent newspaper: The amount of money that has accrued to the South-South governors in the past nine years is enough, more than enough to transform the Niger Delta... If monies are being used judiciously and religiously, the monies that have come to the governors of the South-South today, we would not have the problems we are having in the Niger Delta. Yet, there are no visible signs of development in the region to account for these huge financial injections into the region. The former head of the Nigerian Anti-Corruption Agency, the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), Nuhu Ribadu, estimated that in 2003, 70 percent of oil revenues (more than $14 billion) was stolen or wasted (Usman, 2007).

Endemic Poverty and Unemployment: Central to the Niger Delta crisis is poverty and unemployment amidst unimaginable oil wealth. The endemic poverty and the general state of underdevelopment being witnessed in the Niger Delta region have attracted both local and international attention. This fact was corroborated by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2010), which revealed that poverty has been massive, pervasive, and endemic, and engulfs a large segment of the Niger Delta region. Consequently, over the years, a wide chasm has developed between the Niger Delta region and the rest of the country. Collaborating further, Abiola and Olaopa (2008, 49) averred that the scourge of poverty in the Niger Delta is an incontrovertible fact, which results in hunger, ignorance, malnutrition, disease, unemployment, poor access to credit facilities, low life expectancy as well as a general level of human hopelessness. Another striking feature of the oil-rich region is youth unemployment. Most youths have become unemployed following the destruction of their farmland and the pollution of available rivers. Unfortunately, these young men and women have found it difficult to get jobs in the oil industry due to the capital-intensive nature of the industry. Multinational oil companies are usually reluctant to employ local people because they lack the required skills (Turner, 1980: 201; Bierstecker, 1987: 241).

The Discovery of Oil in the Niger Delta: Before the discovery of Oil in 1956, the Niger Deltan was essentially a pristine environment, which supported substantial subsistence resources for the mostly sedentary population in areas such as farming and fishing, which largely guaranteed a sustainable means of livelihood for the people. The discovery of oil in large volume in 1956 by Shell D' Archy, an Anglo-Dutch consortium in Oloibiri, a tiny poverty-stricken village in the Ogbia clan of Bayelsa state characterised by the destruction of vegetation, farmlands and human settlements marked the commencement of the intense struggle for the survival of the Niger Delta region which has been described as a paradox, 'the richest poorest' region in Nigeria. However, the discovery of oil, which was expected to improve the lot of the communities where it is sourced, has become a curse rather than a blessing because of oil exploration activities and their attendant hazards, such as air and water pollution.

The Blunt Denial of the Peoples' Right by the Government: According to Aghalino (2002), the people of the Niger Delta region began a peaceful demand for their right to good life since 1965 in a bid to draw the attention of the government to their plight and to seek necessary remedies to damages done by the exploration and exploitation of the oil in the region, first through legal actions to compel the beneficiary Multinational Oil Companies (MNOCs) to pay compensation to the host communities. The decision to turn a deaf ear to the peaceful agitation fanned the embers, which eventually propelled aggressive dispositions by the youth who came together to form different groups aimed at emancipating the region from the shackles of neglect and the bondage of underemployment. In May 2007, the Legal Defense and Assistance Project (LEPAD), a non-governmental organization (NGO) estimated that in 2007 at least 241 people were extrajudicially executed by the state security agents in Nigeria (Amnesty International Report, 2009).

Conclusion

The wave of underdevelopment ravaging the Niger Delta region is obvious for everyone to see. This is largely because governance in the region lacks transparency and accountability, while the oil multinationals are allowed to operate unchecked even at the detriment of the people of the region. The region lacks the basic amenities to support livelihood such as good roads, schools, pipe-borne water etc. The people of the Niger Delta, having gone through so much pain, penury, and agony for decades, need some relief to get back to where they should be, taking a cue from other oil-producing areas of the world where oil exploration, community development, and environmental sustainability work without conflict.

Recommendations:

1. Environmental Sustainability: One major recommendation has to be the need to ensure sustainable development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The issue of environmental sustainability cannot be overemphasized in the Niger Delta region, as this is fundamental to the overall well-being and the development of the area, especially the well-being of future generations, which is an important aspect of environmental economics (Eregha & Irughe, 2009). Sustainable development has been described as development that meets the needs and aspirations of the present generation, without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations. According to a World Bank report (1995), sustainable development in the Niger Delta region requires a balance between accelerated economic growth and environmental protection to ensure that people living in the area benefit as much as possible from the exploitation of their resources. Seeking peace and security in the region should best be conceived as an inevitable outcome of sustainable development of the Niger Delta region.
2. Institutionalization of Good Governance: From another developmental perspective, Ibaba (2010) suggested that the most likely option on the way forward for sustainable development in the Niger Delta area was the institution of good governance (at all levels of Government): a government that is predicated on transparency, accountability, frugality in the management of natural resources, sincerity, discipline and commitment to national development objective.
3. The government at all levels of governance and other multinational oil companies operating in the region needs to deliberately commit more funds to the provision of infrastructural facilities that will further enhance and support the livelihood of the people of the Niger Delta region.
4. The government should ensure that there are opportunities for gainful employment for the graduates in the region. The government can go a step further by introducing a quota system that will ensure that a certain number of graduates from the region get employed by these oil multinationals operating in the region. The non-graduates on the other hand, can be trained in one vocation or the other to be self-sufficient/independent.

5. The government should encourage the people to embrace education by organizing seminars and workshops detailing the importance of education to the growth and development of the mind and, of course, society at large. And, fully equip the existing schools in the region with the required facilities while building new ones where none existed.

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We have killed our Ancestors: Interrogating Ijo Cultural Dynamism In the 20th And 21st Centuries

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Abstract
This study examines the cultural dynamism of the Ijo people in the 20th and 21st centuries. The Ijo people are found in the states of Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers, Akwa-Ibom, Cross River, Edo, and Ondo in Nigeria. The people evolved well-defined and sophisticated social, political and economic systems before the 20th and 21st centuries. During the 20th and 21st centuries, the Ijo people underwent significant cultural changes. These changes are the main focus of this paper. To assess these changes, the work took a cursory look at the Ijo culture before the 20th and 21st centuries. The methodology adopted is the historical method. The work is descriptive and analytical. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include oral history and oral tradition. The secondary sources used are: books, chapters in books, journal articles, newspapers and unpublished manuscripts. From the research, it is discovered that the changes are caused by several factors such as poverty, colonialism, Christianity, cultural adaptation and technological transfer.
Keywords: Cultural dynamism, Ijo, colonialism

Introduction

Ijo/Ijaw is the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria (Ama-Ogbari, 2014; Etekpe, 2007). Predominantly, they occupy the length and breadth of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. According to Alagoa (1972), the Ijo and the Itsekiri are the original inhabitants of the Niger Delta region. The Niger Delta, according to Ama-Ogbari, is the region where the River Niger runs into the Atlantic Ocean through many tributaries, creeks and creeklets (Ama-Ogbari, 2009). In the words of Tonbrapagha (2025), the Niger Delta only comprises Bayelsa State, Delta State and Rivers State. Alagoa (1972) divided the Niger Delta into three main geographical areas: Western Delta, Eastern Delta and Central Delta. He further stated that the area stretching from the Benin River to the River Pennington is the Western Delta, from Pennington to the River Nun is the Central Delta and between the Nun River and the Bonny River is the Eastern Delta (Alagoa, 1972). The Ijo people are found in these three geographical areas of the Niger Delta.

Izon is the language of the Ijo people, but within the language, there are dialectical variations. In some groups, like the Mein, Oyiakiri, Tuomo, Kumbo, Kabo, western Tarakiri, Iduwini, Seimbiri, Gbaramaotu and western Oporoma, the variation is not much as they usually understand one another very well. Kay Williamson and E.E. Eferebo stated that the Izon language belongs to the Niger- Congo family. (Williamson and Eferebo, 1999). The Izon language is further divided into three: Eastern, Western and Central Izon. Eastern Izon comprises Nkoro, Kalabiri, Okrika and Ibani (Bonny) in Rivers State. In Bayelsa State, it comprises only Nembe and Akaha (Akassa). The Western Izon comprises the Tarakiri, Tuomo, Oporomo, Oyiakiri, Kumbo, Kabo, Iduwini, Seimbiri, Gbaramaotu and other Ijo clans in the Western Delta. While in the Central Delta, the following Izon dialects are found: Gbarain, Kolokuma, Opokuma, Biseni, Okordia, Ekpetiama, Bassan, Apoi, Ogboin, Olodiama and Bomo (Williamson & Eferebo 1999)

The metaphorical expression "we have killed our ancestors" refers to the erosion of the Ijo culture: the depleting state of the Ijo's rich cultural heritage, the practices of the forefathers (the ancestors). Culture is an identity, and the identity of the Ijo people has been adulterated. According to Okaba (1999), the name "Ijo" means truth, justice and fairness. In the same vein, Bunu (2025) reveals that the name "Ijo" means truth. He stated further that the Ijo man is incorruptible, an epitome of justice and fairness and does not tolerate nonsense. These characteristics, according to him, are no longer common among the Ijo man, which explains the gradual depletion of the rich Ijo cultural heritage.

The wish of a father is for his children to inherit or exhibit his good conduct, which would portray a good image of the family to the larger society. The Ijo ancestors lived a well- cultured life during their time on earth. With that, it was hoped that their children would follow their footsteps; represent them, maintain their culture and preserve it for their children's children. The mark of the Ijo ancestors is gradually depleting because

their children are struggling to preserve their culture. The Ijo culture is gradually going extinct. Thus, to properly analyze and interrogate the dynamics of Ijo culture in the 20th and 21st centuries, it is pertinent to examine the Ijo culture before the 20th and 21st centuries.

Ijo Culture before the 20th and 21st Centuries

The Ijo people, before the 20th and 21st centuries, were well-cultured in all ramifications of human and societal endeavours. They had a rich culture that portrayed their worldview as well as clearly defined their status in life. They had a social system that was based on stratification. At the top of this stratification were the elders, *Okosuotu/Okosuongu*. They were the custodians of wisdom, culture and the traditions of their people. In fact, they were regarded as professors because of their intellectuality, ways handling issues, as well as their wealth of experience. It was believed that they knew everything about life. Due to their position in society and the respect accorded to them, they hardly tell lies (C.M. Sorgwe, 2025). According to Sorgwe, elders before the 20th and 21st centuries were very conscious of themselves because of the consequences of falsification. They believed that they would be punished by the gods and the ancestors whenever they told lies. As a result, he concluded that it was necessary to tell the truth always, and information given by elders during this time was more accurate (Sorgwe, 2025).

Next to the elders were the youths, *Kalaposi/Kalaongu/Asiaposi.* They were responsible for keeping their communities clean, such as clearing grass, sweeping and going for errands. They embarked on all kinds of communal works, including entertainment as well as defending their communities against external encroachment and aggression. According to Tar-Arede Bonu, it was a serious offence for a youth to raise his voice against an elder. If such behaviour from a youth happens, it was his fellow youths who gather to beat him. Respect for elders had no measure during this time (Bunu, 2025). In the same vein, Julius Ebibor also stated that a youth could go for a particular errand for over twenty times without murmuring or complain, stating further that respect from youths was highly appreciated (Julius, 2025).

The bottom of the ladder was occupied by the *Kalawou*. This group comprised the very young people. No special work was assigned to them. They only assisted their parents in domestic works such as washing of plates, sweeping houses as well as running of small errands within and outside the home. They were considered innocent. As a result, they were easily forgiven even when they misbehaved. According to Erezene (2010), in the above social structure, even two different groups jointly played and joked together, but even at that, they all knew their limits. Age was highly respected in Ijo societies.

Marriage was another social institution that was held in high esteem among the Ijo people. According to Dudei (2025), marriage in Ijo land was sacred. That it was a bond not only between the man and the woman but between the two families. Accordingly, he stated that women hardly commit adultery during this time. If a woman was caught in the act of adultery, she was regarded as an "attempted murderer". The belief was that the act would invariably kill her husband. He went further to explain that such a woman could plan with the other man to kill the real husband. In any case, if the culprits refused to confess their crime, they would be punished by the gods of the land, which may lead to their sudden death.

Polygamy was the nature of the Ijo man. According to Okaba (1999), while emphasizing the Ijo social structure, he stated that monogamy symbolized degradation and failure, while polygamy symbolized success. He further explained that the fundamental structures of social relations that facilitated the maintenance of peace, order and tranquility in the Ijo society included the traditional mechanism of kinship regulation, rules of descent and marriage and the principle of inheritance. Sorgwe (2014) also stated that there was a kinship bond that held the people together in the polygamous family. Beginning with the nuclear family, the kinship expands into the extended family and the lineage group. The social structure of most Ijo communities was composed of the nuclear families, extended family units and lineage wards; a conglomeration of which made up a settlement. The knowledge drawn from Okaba and Sorgwe is that polygamy in Ijo society was productive, leading to population growth, which in turn led to the establishment of villages.

According to Asekiri (2007), during this time, women in Ijo land never denied their husbands of sexual intercourse except the woman in question was very ill, seeing her monthly flow, or seriously injured. She went further to say that it was an abomination in Ijo land for a man to kneel before a woman. She revealed that every man was a king, with a crown hence he could never bow to anyone. Speaking further, she stated that payment of bridal fees was done through presentation of stipulated items such as the local gin, *Kaikai,* tubers of yam, wrappers, among others. In some cases, the woman did not even know when her bride price was paid. She was only informed that she had married and was taken to her husband. In such cases, the consent of the parents was all that was required. In the case of death, the woman's body was returned to her father's compound for burial. The bones of a woman were and are still very important in Ijo land. This belief hinges on the idea that they do

not sell their daughters and that the husband will respect, value and protect their daughter because the process of bringing back her corpse is very costly.

The birth of a child was accompanied by a great jubilation as family members, friends and in fact, the whole village or community presented gifts to the newborn baby. They believed that the baby belonged to society. In this case, children were well-tutored, treated and disciplined when they misbehaved not only by the parents but by every individual in the community. Therefore, training a child was a collective effort by the entire community. Because of that, children hardly misbehaved, and they grew up with the attitude of respecting elders (Julius, 2025).

The Ijo people also had their unique way of burying their dead. Firstly, when someone dies, it was the tradition of the Ijo people to find out the cause of the death, whether the deceased was into witchcraft or not. This discovery determined the burial place of the deceased. Witches and wizards and those who had killed people through diabolical means during their time on earth were thrown into the evil forest or the river. People who died accidentally *Owofi,* were not buried in the community. They were buried across, that is, the opposite side of the river banks. People who died naturally with "clean belly" were buried in the community with a befitting burial (Yoruba & Larry 2022). According to Okaba (1999), those who died in their prime, including children attracted a retinue of sympathizers with great agony. The death of an individual always brings sorrow to the Ijo people.

The Ijo people practiced a polytheistic religion. They served different kinds of gods. The gods they served included *Egbesu, Gbarainziba, Ogidiga* (*Nembe-Nyana-Oru) Benikurukuru,* and others. Apart from these, they also believed in the existence of a Supreme Being who lived above the sky. They called this Being *Tamarau, Oyin, Temeowei, and Ayiba*. They believed that other gods were mere messengers to this Supreme Being (Yoruba & Larry 2022)

The worship of these gods bonded the people together as one. Through this medium, a sense of belonging, love, peace and unity was established among the people. According to Ebibor (2025), the worship of these gods or deities was sacred, and as a result, defaulters were vehemently punished. Consequently, adherents were very conscious of themselves, and they always did the needful. These deities also protected the communities from calamity and, in most cases, prevented premature deaths. He went further to say that during this time, Ijo communities were peaceful and there was unity among the people. On his own part, Dudei (2025) stated that people hardly steal or commit abominable acts because of the fear of repercussion and the intervention of the gods, as each of the gods served a specific purpose.

Apart from the above, other divinities played significant roles in society. These divinities were found both in the land and in the waterways. According to Okaba (1999), water spirits, *beni-out,* in most cases provided financial success to people in Ijo land; men and women, in some cases, were married to water spirits.

On the other hand, bush spirits also provided financial and other material assistance to individuals in Ijoland. When people got lost in the forest and could not find their way out, it was believed that bush spirits directed their paths. This happened like a sign or symbols believing to have been done by the spirits.

The Ijo people had a strong belief in life after death. According to Erezene (2010), in his book, *A History of the Iduwini and Kou in the Western Niger Delta,* the people of Iduwini and Kou believed that death is just another phase of life; that is, a dead person simply resurfaces in another world, which is called *duwama*. This was a general belief among the Ijo people. There was also the belief that a man or a woman who died a "bad death" *seifi* or lived an evil life here on earth is not welcome in *duwama* (dead people's town). These beliefs enabled the Ijo people live a "pure" life, and as a result, society was peaceful.

Educationally, learning was based on practical terms. According to Okaba (1999), the education was characteristically non-formal but utilitarian. Attainment of a high moral standard and the inculcation of dignity in labour were the major objectives. Accordingly, he stated that virtues such as respect for elders and constituted authorities, kindness, discipline, love of peace, tolerance, sincerity, hard work and honesty were highly encouraged. In the same vein, Eselemokumo (2025) also stated that the education system was non-formal, learning was practical. Young girls were taught how to cook, care for children and weave. The boys, on the other hand, were taught how to carve, tap palm wine, and paddle canoes. The system encouraged production, and feeding was not a problem. The system discouraged laziness, theft, covetousness, insincerity, cruelty, incest, aggression, hostility and violence. The teachers in this context were the fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters, all adult members of the community, diviners, medicine men and priests. Children were prepared in basic skills, such as the production of food, construction of shelter, traditional medicine, constructive reasoning, social organization and management. The methodology was learning by doing.

Attached to the above social structure were the moonlight plays such as *kpaikpaikolo kpaikolo* and the folktales. Children, in most cases, gathered in their community's square during the night to listen to stories delivered by the elders. These stories were educative, often leading to unity and children-parents' relationship.

Politically, the Ijo people practiced a government of gerontocracy. Each of the Ijo communities was headed by *Amakosuowei/Amanyanabo.* They presided over the affairs of their respective communities. *Amakosuowei/Amanyanabo* performed both legislative and judicial functions. In some cases, they were also the chief priests in their communities.

The *Orukariowei* (chief priest) acted as an intermediary between the gods and the ordinary people. He consulted the gods and then conveyed the messages to the people, and rituals and other sacrifices were performed by the *Orukariowei.* The *Bebe-areowei/Ogulasuowei* (spokesman) was an important figure in the traditional Ijo political structure. He spoke on the issues presented before the *Amanyanabo/Amakosuowei.* His words were diplomatic in nature (Alagoa, 1972). At the clan level, leadership was conferred on the *Pere* (king). The *Peres,* in most cases, were also the chief priests of their clan deities. Oweike (2018) informed that the *Pere* of Oporoma clan in the Western Niger Delta was also the chief priest of the clan's deity, *Egbesu*.

In the dispensation of justice, minor cases such as quarrels, family disputes and others were settled amicably within the house *wari,* by the elders, while major cases such as murder, adultery, land and family disputes were settled at the office of the *Amakosuowei/Amanyanabo.* Among the Ijo of the Western Delta, judgment started from the nuclear family (*Wari*), to the extended family (*biri*), the quarter (*Idumu*), the office of the *Amanyanabo/Amakosuowei* and finally, the office of the *Pere.* A dissatisfied party to a judgment could appeal to another community. The final place of appeal was the shrine of the clan's deity, *Egbesu*. According to Enaigor (2025), judgments during this time tended to be fair because for the penalty of telling lies. According to him, any leader who acted contrary to the will and the instructions of the gods and the ancestors was seriously punished. Because of the consequences therein, it was compulsory to always tell the truth.

In the economic culture, Okaba (1999) informed that the Ijo people were originally fishermen. Other economic activities highlighted by him include farming, hunting and gathering, palm oil production, palm wine tapping, carving and trade. The above economic activities were also highlighted and discussed by Ama-Ogbari (2009) in his book, *Introduction to the Economic History of the Niger Delta.* Thus, the Ijo people had a very rich culture before the 20th century.

Ijo Cultural Dynamism in the 20th and 21st Centuries

The dynamic nature of culture cannot be overemphasized. Culture is bound to change, but the question of cultural change is a complex one due to the variety of meanings attached to the word "change." Some people refer to it as: to alter, convert, divert, diversify, fluctuate, transform, translate, and reform and so on. In this context, the culture of the Ijo people has been altered by external forces.

Virtually, every aspect of the culture is affected. The change is such that it can be described as a "silent revolution". Ijo culture has passed through stages of change beginning from the late 19th century, but the changes in the 20th and 21st centuries cannot be compared to the previous ones, as these changes are massive. Starting from the social structure, the moonlight plays, and the folktales (storytelling) are no longer pronounced. People hardly come together to play, irrespective of age. To this, the communal lifestyle that was inherent among the Ijo people is gradually fading away. Coupled with the above, respect for age is dying off. Suffice it to say that elders are no longer valued the way they were in traditional Ijo society. According to Ebibor (2025), in the olden days, youths or children did not come close or sit where an elder was talking. But now the situation is different. They now approach elders wrongly. They also struggle for a seat with the elders. He went further to say that when you caution them, they always say, "Are you the one feeding me?"

In the same vein, Perekeme (2025) stated that even within the family, family heads give more recognition to those who provide financial aid to them, irrespective of age. Consequently, he explained that in some situations, the elders are not allowed to talk during family meetings because they have no financial contributions. In his view, Ototo (2025) stated that the elders themselves have lost integrity in society, because some of them go after young boys and girls begging for money and sometimes even kneel before them. This was not the case in the traditional Ijo society.

The institution of marriage is another area of Ijo culture that has experienced massive change. Among the Ijo people, it was the practice for a married woman to keep herself faithful to her husband, but the situation is not the same today. This, off course, is not peculiar to the Ijo woman; it is a global thing. Coupled with the above, new forms of marriages are also injected into the Ijo society. These are white and court marriages. Some even choose to go to court even when the bride price, which is a traditional requirement for marriage, has not been paid. The claim is that this is a modern era.

According to Eselemokeme (2025), in the olden days, it was a source of pride and a sign of wealth for a man to have several wives. To this, a larger family was established, and the workforce was increased. As a result, production was high. However, in the 20th and 21st centuries, polygamy is described as a sin, and as a result, according to him, many women are still single because the population of women is higher than that of the men. According to Aseikiri (2007), before this time, it was never the practice of Ijo man to kneel before a woman. She also added that men were not allowed to cross the legs of a woman, pass under a woman's wrapper and sleep with a woman on her monthly flow. If any of these things happened, she stated that the man would become powerless and that he could be killed in battle if not cleansed. This is embedded in the belief system as well as the worship of the *Egbesu* deity. But now, men kneel before women in the name of a marriage proposal and also sleep with women during her monthly flow.

The pattern of dressing of the Ijo people is another area that has drastically changed. Eselemokeme (2025) stated that in the olden days, it was difficult for a man to see a woman's nakedness apart from that of his wife. In essence, he stated that proper dressing was compulsory and it was a pride and a sign of responsibility for both male and female, old and young, including children. He further stated that "virginity was the pride of the Ijo woman. However, in the 20th and 21st centuries, the story is not the same as some young girls and boys, including some mature people, who dress irresponsibly, exposing sensitive parts of their bodies and engaging in indecent acts.

Traditional worship is highly discouraged and neglected to a large extent during our period and this is due to the introduction of Christianity during the contact period. In the traditional Ijo society, the patterns of worship bonded the people together as one. Through ancestral worship, there was an unbroken link or bond between the ancestors and the people. The traditional religious practices instilled fear in the people, and because of that, the people hardly commit sin. Repercussion and the intervention of the gods and the ancestors were eminent and at speed level, therefore, the people were very conscious of their dealings with one another, and as a result, social vices were at a very low level in the Ijo society. However, these religious practices are no longer pronounced in contemporary times. The people have now embraced a new religion called Christianity. The doctrines of Christianity are against traditional worship. Consequently, most people have abandoned the worship of deities.

The changes are also apparent in the political life of the Ijo people. Traditionally, according to Okaba (1999), leadership in Ijoland was based on merit: selection by the gods and the ancestors with divine confirmation. In the various communities, he stated that the founder of the community or settlement automatically became the leader. He attained the title of *Amanyanabo*/*Amananaowei*. *Ibedaowei* or *Pere* for clans. Leaders in this period were credible, truthful, vibrant and enthusiastic in nature. They had the "heart" of the people and ruled with dignity and with the fear of the gods. Now, leadership in Ijoland is by election in most cases and connection. Many leaders are no longer truthful, vibrant or enthusiastic and some engage in acts inimical to the growth and development of their people to enrich themselves. These developments have caused conflicts in many Ijo communities.

Traditionally, in Ijo land, every youth, from fifteen (15) years and above, had his own farm (self-employed). The agrarian economy was very simple. Feeding was very easy. The system was so encouraging that every individual was hardworking. There was an intensive labour force in each of the families. Consequently, there was a high level of production, and feeding was not a problem. However, in the 20th and 21st centuries, according to Fadaku (2025), 80% of the Ijo youths are not self-employed. Most of them are in the cities looking for white-collar jobs, while others are still eating from their parents, uncles, aunties and other people's pots. Consequently, they fall prey to desperate politicians and are used as political thugs and errand boys.

Causes of Ijo Cultural Dynamism in the 20th and 21st Centuries

The law of causation explains that events did not just happen; they are caused by factors (Sorgwe 2011). In essence, the cultural dynamism of the Ijo people is caused by a number of factors. These factors include poverty, Christianity, colonialism, modernity, and technological transfer. Available evidence indicates that some parents in Ijoland cannot perform their parental responsibilities because of poverty; hence, their children have no access to education, and even to feed is a problem. Consequently, this set of children join bad "gangs" and in the process, lost their Ijo culture. According to Okilo (2025), these are the children who always say "Are you the one feeding me?"

Religiously, the Christian missionaries always preach against the traditional practices of the Ijo people. For instance, they always preach against polygamy, traditional songs, dances, and festivals. As a result, some people abandoned these practices and embraced the Christian religion, while others adjusted their ways of life.

Let it be known that Christianity came to Africa and, by implication, Ijo land during the contact period and became well established in the colonial period.

Talking about the causes of Ijo cultural dynamism in the 20th and 21st centuries, Yeibo (2025) stated that technology transfer is one of the powerful forces. Speaking further, he said that the telephones, televisions, Facebook, WhatsApp among other internet services, are agents of cultural change. That, these things give out information about European and American cultures, and by implication, the Ijo youth copy from them. They copied their dressing patterns, food items, pornography, among other things, and all these have contributed greatly to the erosion and depletion of the Ijo culture.

Conclusion

Culture is what defines a man or a group of people. Ijo culture is gradually going extinct, and in the coming years, if a deliberate attempt is not made to preserve the culture, 80% of the cultural traits would become obsolete. Language is the first identity of a group of people. The Izon language is at the verge of extinction because the speakers themselves have lost interest. In the villages, communities, towns and in the cities, they all embrace and speak English language, instead of the Izon language. This is in addition to other core values of the people. It is recorded that culture is an identity and pride of a people; therefore, the Ijo people are gradually losing their identity and pride. This work is therefore, a clarion call to all Ijo people, irrespective of their social, political, or economic status, to revive the Ijo culture to avoid the culture from going extinct. By this, people should be encouraged to speak the Izon language at all times, irrespective of where they are: their homes, schools, offices, and churches. Linguists, historians and traditionalists should all be encouraged to write and publish the histories and culture of the Ijo people. Organisers of festivals in the various Ijo clans should feature Ijo cultural practices in these festivals, such as singing songs, dances, wrestling, storytelling, and what have you. Leaders in Ijo land should also endeavour to promote and portray our Ijoness and do away with acts that will desecrate our land, and by implication, our culture. These will be a testament and a footprint to the next generation and generations unborn.

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United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) Inclusive Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Nigeria, 2015–2023: Implementation And Impact

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Abstract
Education for children with disabilities is a recognized right, yet it faces substantial barriers in Nigeria due to infrastructural deficiencies and societal attitudes. Global commitments like SDG 4 emphasize inclusive education for all, prompting UNICEF since 2015 to implement programs aimed at dismantling these barriers. These initiatives target policy advocacy, teacher training, assistive technologies, and community engagement to integrate children with disabilities into mainstream schooling. This study employed a mixed-methods design combining surveys (n=387) and interviews, supplemented by document review, to assess UNICEF's programs in Nigeria from 2015 to 2023. Participants included children with disabilities, families, educators, and officials from diverse regions. The stratified sample spanned urban and rural settings and both public and private schools, enabling analysis of program implementation and outcomes across contexts. Findings indicate that UNICEF's initiatives have increased awareness and enrollment in areas where they were implemented, though impact remains uneven nationwide. Survey results show that about 58% of respondents were aware of specific initiatives, and roughly half rated program visibility as high. Approximately 54% judged the programs effective in improving access, but many reported persistent obstacles. Key barriers include limited funding (32.8% of respondents), inadequate infrastructure (27.5%), insufficiently trained teachers (20.3%), and cultural resistance. Interviews highlighted localized successes (e.g., more sign-language-trained teachers) and gaps (e.g., lack of ramps), underscoring regional disparities. The study concludes that enhancing inclusive education will require intensifying community outreach, investing in disability-friendly school facilities, expanding teacher training, and ensuring adequate funding. These recommendations aim to refine UNICEF's inclusive education strategies and inform policy measures, thereby ensuring equitable, high-quality education for all Nigerian children with disabilities.
Keywords: Inclusive education, children with disabilities, UNICEF, educational access, program effectiveness, educational equity, disability policy.

Introduction

Education is universally acknowledged as a fundamental human right, enshrined in international law and pivotal for personal empowerment and societal development (Cernomoriț, 2023). It holds particular significance for vulnerable populations, notably children with disabilities, who face numerous barriers in accessing quality education (Duminică & Puran, 2018). The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 4, has reinforced global commitment to providing inclusive and equitable education for all by 2030 (Broderick, 2018). This goal underscores the necessity of integrating marginalized groups into the educational framework, ensuring no one is left behind (Polisca, 2022).

In Nigeria, the challenge of educating children with disabilities is compounded by a complex interplay of infrastructural deficiencies and deeply ingrained societal attitudes (Faizefu, 2023). These children often encounter formidable obstacles that limit their access to educational facilities and services, highlighting a critical need for inclusive education (Mantey, 2020). This concept, which aims to integrate all learners into mainstream educational systems regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities, is essential for achieving educational equity (Zaorska, 2023).

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has been at the vanguard of advocating for these principles, both on a global scale and within the specific context of Nigeria (Dube, Ncube, Mapuvire, Ndlovu, Ncube, & Mlotshwa, 2021). Since the formal adoption of the SDGs in 2015, UNICEF has intensified its efforts in policy advocacy, program implementation, and strategic collaborations with government entities

(Manomano, 2023). These initiatives are designed to dismantle the multifaceted barriers that children with disabilities face, facilitating their full participation in the educational process (Roger, 2019).

Despite these concerted efforts, numerous Nigerian schools still lack the essential physical infrastructure required to support children with disabilities effectively (Ahmed, Isiaka, & Tauheed, 2024). The absence or insufficiency of facilities such as ramps, accessible restrooms, and classroom adaptations represents a significant impediment to the inclusion of these students (Brydges & Mkandawire, 2018). This deficiency not only hampers their physical access but also impacts their ability to participate fully in the educational experience (Sijuola, 2022).

The actual implementation of inclusive education policies in Nigeria has been characterized by inconsistency and delays, with a noticeable disparity between policy formulation and practical application (Angwaomaodoko, 2023). This research aims to critically examine the strategic approaches adopted by UNICEF from 2015 to 2023, focusing particularly on how these initiatives have navigated the complex challenges of policy and practice within the Nigerian educational sector (Oyekan, Ayorinde, & Adenuga, 2023).

By exploring the broader socio-political and economic factors that influence educational policies, this study will provide valuable insights into the complexities of implementing inclusive education in a developing country like Nigeria. Factors such as political will, economic stability, and prevailing social norms play substantial roles in shaping the educational landscape and determining the success of inclusive policies.

This research aims to make a significant contribution to the academic discourse on inclusive education. It seeks to offer evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, educators, and organizations like UNICEF, aimed at enhancing the efficacy of educational strategies. By systematically analyzing both the successes and the shortcomings of current approaches, the study advocates for the development and implementation of more robust and effective educational strategies. These strategies should ensure that all children, particularly those with disabilities, receive the quality education they rightfully deserve and are entitled to under global human rights standards. This research problem seeks to bridge the gap between the ambitious goals outlined in Nigeria's inclusive education policies and the lived realities of children with disabilities. By analyzing recent interventions and their impact, the study aims to identify practical, evidence-based strategies to enhance educational access and equity.

Theoretical Framework

Inclusive education theory

Inclusive Education Theory is grounded in the belief that all learners, regardless of ability, disability, or background, should be educated together in mainstream classrooms (Danforth & Naraian, 2015). Rather than requiring students to adapt to rigid educational structures, this theory advocates for transforming schools to meet the diverse needs of all learners (Ainscow & Miles, 2008; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Emerging prominently in the late 20th century, Inclusive Education Theory is deeply rooted in global movements for human rights and social justice, particularly the disability rights movement (Graham, 2020). Although it does not have a single founder, the theory has been shaped by key proponents such as Mel Ainscow, Tony Booth, Linda Ware, and Roger Slee, whose contributions from the 1980s onwards have significantly influenced inclusive educational policy and practice. Ainscow (2005, 2020) emphasized systemic reform to promote equity, while Booth and Ainscow (2002) developed the *Index for Inclusion*, a practical guide for fostering inclusion in schools. Ware (2002) brought a critical disability studies perspective to the conversation, advocating for moral engagement with difference, and Slee (2011, 2018) offered a radical critique of traditional special education and its segregating tendencies.

The global momentum for inclusive education was further propelled by landmark international declarations. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) asserted that inclusive schools are the most effective way to combat discriminatory attitudes, while the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (United Nations, 2006) enshrined inclusive education as a basic human right in Article 24. At the heart of Inclusive Education Theory are the interrelated principles of diversity, equity, and participation. Diversity acknowledges that learners have unique identities and learning profiles; equity ensures that all students have access to the necessary support and resources; and participation emphasizes meaningful involvement in all aspects of school life (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Mugambi, 2017; Booth & Ainscow, 2002). This approach moves away from deficit-based views of disability and toward a strengths-based model that recognizes the value of all learners. However, scholars such as Florian (2014) and Slee (2018) note that despite strong theoretical and policy frameworks, implementation remains challenging due to systemic barriers, lack of training, and resource constraints. Nonetheless, Inclusive Education Theory remains a vital framework for

promoting educational equity and creating learning environments that are accessible, supportive, and empowering for all students.

While Inclusive Education Theory offers a promising framework for improving educational outcomes for children with disabilities, challenges remain. These include limited resources, insufficient teacher training, and societal attitudes towards disability. However, the opportunities for creating more equitable and inclusive educational environments are significant. By embracing Inclusive Education Theory, schools can become places where all children, regardless of their abilities, can learn and thrive together (UNESCO, 2020; Goodley, 2017). Inclusive Education Theory provides a powerful framework for promoting the education of children with disabilities in Nigeria. By focusing on diversity, equity, and participation, this theory aligns with UNICEF's mission to ensure that all children have access to quality education. Implementing this theory requires systemic change, collaboration, and a commitment to creating inclusive educational environments that support the learning and development of all students (UNICEF, 2019; UNESCO, 2020; Slee, 2018).

Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design to examine UNICEF's role in promoting inclusive education for children with disabilities in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023. The integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a comprehensive framework to evaluate both the implementation and impact of UNICEF's interventions across various regions and population groups. The research population consists of all school-age children with disabilities in Nigeria who are impacted by UNICEF's educational programs, as well as educators, school administrators, policymakers, and family members of children with disabilities. This diverse participant pool is essential for capturing a holistic understanding of inclusive education in the Nigerian context, aligning with the recommendations of scholars who emphasize the importance of multiple stakeholder perspectives (Brydges & Mkandawire, 2018; Wickenden et al., 2023).

The qualitative component involves in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to explore the lived experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by children with disabilities, their families, teachers, and educational authorities. Interviews are conducted in private settings to encourage open dialogue and confidentiality, with each session lasting approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Focus group discussions offer additional insight through collective reflection, especially among educators and parents. To contextualize the qualitative findings, a content analysis of relevant secondary materials such as policy documents, UNICEF program reports, and academic literature is conducted to identify thematic gaps and to triangulate data.

The quantitative component employs structured survey questionnaires to collect data from a sample that includes children with disabilities (when appropriate), their families, educators, and school officials. The surveys gather data on measurable indicators such as enrollment and retention rates, academic performance, availability of assistive devices and specialized services, and demographic characteristics such as age, gender, type of disability, and geographic location. The sample size is calculated using Cochran's formula, appropriate for large populations, with a 95% confidence level ($Z = 1.96$), a population proportion (p) of 0.5 for maximum variability, and a margin of error (e) of 0.05. Substituting these values yields a minimum required sample size of approximately 384 participants. To account for potential non-responses or incomplete data, the final sample size is increased to 400 respondents, including both direct beneficiaries (students and their families) and indirect stakeholders (educators and administrators), consistent with similar research practices that emphasize representation and robustness (Hamza, 2024).

To ensure fair representation across Nigeria's diverse educational and regional contexts, the study adopts a stratified random sampling technique. Stratification is based on geographic location (North, South, East, and West), school type (public and private), and community setting (urban and rural). This method enhances the ability to analyze demographic and contextual influences on inclusive education, enabling more nuanced and generalizable conclusions. The value of stratified sampling in education research is well established, particularly for examining disparities across diverse social and institutional environments (Matasio et al., 2023).

The study is conducted in Nigeria, a country with an estimated population of over 220 million and a land area of approximately 923,768 square kilometers (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2023). The country experiences two major climatic seasons: a dry season from November to February and a rainy season from March to October, both of which are considered in the planning and scheduling of data collection to maximize accessibility and participation (Akuraga & Uganden, 2024). The mixed-methods design is thus well-suited to address the complex, multidimensional nature of inclusive education and to generate policy-relevant insights for UNICEF and national education stakeholders.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1.1: Responses on the awareness of specific UNICEF initiatives aimed at educating children with disabilities in Nigeria (2015–2023)

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	226	58.5%
No	161	41.5%
Total	**400**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, April 2025

From the above table, it can be deduced that a majority of the respondents (58.5%) are aware of specific UNICEF initiatives targeted at educating children with disabilities in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023. This indicates a significant level of awareness, which is crucial for ensuring program visibility and effectiveness. However, a substantial portion of respondents (41.5%) reported no awareness of these initiatives, signifying a gap in communication and outreach efforts that needs to be bridged to maximize the impact of these programs.

During interviews, several participants emphasized these disparities. A school administrator from Enugu noted that "*UNICEF trained teachers in sign language here and provided inclusive textbooks. We've seen real progress, especially with enrollment*." In contrast, a representative of a local NGO in Zamfara observed, "*In our area, there's limited knowledge about any UNICEF programme. If they're working here, it's not well-publicized or coordinated with local educators.*" These accounts corroborate the quantitative finding and reflect regional inconsistencies in programme exposure.

The findings imply a need for UNICEF and partner agencies to intensify communication strategies and strengthen regional outreach, particularly in underserved areas. Information dissemination mechanisms such as community sensitization, radio programs, and collaboration with local institutions may enhance awareness and equitable access to inclusive education interventions.

Table 1.2: Responses on the visibility of UNICEF's educational initiatives for children with disabilities in communities

Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	73	19%
High	114	29.5%
Moderate	100	25.8%
Low	69	17.8%
Very low	31	8%
Total	**387**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, April 2025

The table above demonstrates that while 48.5% of respondents (combining "Very high" and "High") perceive UNICEF's initiatives as having strong visibility in their communities, a notable portion rated visibility as moderate (25.8%). Additionally, a combined 25.8% rated visibility as either low or very low, suggesting that outreach in certain regions might not be as effective as intended. Interview insights reinforced this pattern. A headteacher in Lagos mentioned, *"UNICEF's presence is strong here. They held community town halls, supplied materials, and monitored implementation regularly."* However, a special education consultant in Borno provided a contrasting view: *"Initiatives exist, but their visibility is weak. Many families remain unaware due to poor community outreach."* These differences highlight how socio-geographic factors influence programme reach.

These findings underscore the importance of a differentiated outreach strategy that targets low-visibility zones with context-appropriate engagement. Improving visibility not only strengthens program ownership but also increases community trust and participation, which are critical for sustainable educational inclusion.

Table 1.3: Responses on the effectiveness of UNICEF's initiatives in improving access to education for children with disabilities

Effectiveness Level	Frequency	Percentage
Very effective	115	29.8%
Somewhat effective	94	24.3%
Neutral	78	20.3%
Somewhat ineffective	60	15.5%
Very ineffective	40	10.3%
Total	**387**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, April 2025

From the table above, it can be observed that a majority of respondents (54.1%) rated UNICEF's initiatives as effective (combining "Very effective" and "Somewhat effective"), showing positive progress in improving educational access for children with disabilities. However, a significant portion (20.3%) remained neutral, while 25.8% rated the initiatives as ineffective (combining "Somewhat ineffective" and "Very ineffective"), highlighting areas where improvements are needed to enhance impact. Interview data provided useful context for these mixed views. A local government education officer in Rivers State stated, *"The initiatives helped boost enrollment and lowered dropout rates, especially after assistive devices were introduced."* At the same time, a teacher in Bauchi added, *"Enrollment increased, yes, but there are still children with disabilities we can't accommodate due to lack of resources. The impact is uneven."* Together, these responses indicate incremental progress but also identify limitations in reach and inclusivity.

The mixed perception of effectiveness suggests the need for stronger program evaluation mechanisms and better alignment of interventions with local needs. Enhancing resource allocation, training, and community involvement can ensure that the benefits of these initiatives are equitably distributed across diverse regions.

Table 1.4: Responses on the barriers to implementing inclusive education policies for children with disabilities

Barrier	Frequency	Percentage
Financial constraints	127	32.8%
Lack of infrastructure	106	27.5%
Insufficient trained staff	79	20.3%
Cultural resistance	55	14.3%
Policy inconsistency	20	5.3%
Total	**387**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, April 2025

From the above table, it is evident that financial constraints (32.8%) and lack of infrastructure (27.5%) are the predominant barriers to implementing inclusive education policies for children with disabilities. These factors account for over half of the responses, indicating critical areas that need attention. Other barriers include insufficiently trained staff (20.3%), cultural resistance (14.3%), and policy inconsistency (5.3%). Interview findings reflect similar concerns. An inclusion program coordinator in Abuja remarked, *"We don't have enough trained teachers, and in many schools, there are no ramps or accessible classrooms."* Echoing this, an activist from Sokoto added, *"Even when funding is available, cultural resistance makes it difficult. Families hide children with disabilities out of shame."* These comments lend personal perspectives to the quantitative data, drawing attention to the intersection between technical, cultural, and logistical constraints.

The prevalence of financial and infrastructural barriers points to the urgent need for sustained government investment and donor support in inclusive education. Furthermore, addressing cultural resistance requires targeted advocacy and community-based interventions that shift societal perceptions and promote inclusivity from the grassroots level.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of responses on awareness of specific UNICEF initiatives for educating children with disabilities in Nigeria revealed that a significant majority of respondents (58.5%) were aware of these initiatives. This indicates that UNICEF has made considerable strides in publicizing its programs. However, a substantial portion (41.5%) remains unaware, revealing a communication gap that could weaken programme impact. Interviews with stakeholders reinforced this discrepancy. A school administrator from Enugu stated, *"UNICEF trained teachers in sign language here and provided inclusive textbooks. We've seen real progress, especially with enrollment."* In contrast, an NGO official in Zamfara reported, *"In our area, there's limited knowledge about any UNICEF programme. If they're working here, it's not well-publicized or coordinated with local educators."* These perspectives confirm that while visibility exists in certain regions, communication efforts may still be lacking in marginalized communities. This discrepancy aligns with Angwaomaodoko (2023), who found that inadequate understanding and awareness are among the key challenges hindering inclusive education in Nigeria's primary schools. Thus, despite positive strides in visibility, UNICEF and partners must enhance targeted awareness campaigns particularly in underserved communities to address this disparity.

Another finding is related to the visibility of UNICEF's educational initiatives in communities. While 48.5% of respondents rated visibility as high or very high, a considerable percentage (25.8%) rated it as moderate, with another 25.8% rating it as low or very low. This disparity suggests that while the initiatives are well-publicized in some areas, others remain underexposed. This mirrors findings by Yusuf and Rakiya (2024), who describe an

uneven distribution of inclusive education efforts across Nigerian regions. Consequently, UNICEF should consider deploying specific outreach strategies, such as local school advocacy and mobile information units, to ensure equitable presence in all communities. This perception was echoed in the interviews. A headteacher in Lagos noted, *"UNICEF's presence is strong here. They held community town halls, supplied materials, and monitored implementation regularly."* On the other hand, a special education consultant based in Borno remarked, *"Initiatives exist, but their visibility is weak. Many families remain unaware due to poor community outreach."* These accounts highlight the uneven penetration of UNICEF's outreach strategies across Nigeria.

In terms of the effectiveness of UNICEF's initiatives in improving access to education, the findings show that 54.1% of respondents rated them as effective (combining "Very effective" and "Somewhat effective"). However, 25.8% rated the initiatives as ineffective, and 20.3% remained neutral. This variation signals that while positive results are being achieved, the experiences of many communities reflect persistent challenges. Interview responses support this nuanced outlook. A local government education officer in Rivers State reported, *"The initiatives helped boost enrollment and lowered dropout rates, especially after assistive devices were introduced."* Meanwhile, a primary school teacher in Bauchi commented, *"Enrollment increased, yes—but there are still children with disabilities we can't accommodate due to lack of space or resources. The impact is uneven."* These contrasting responses speak to the variable success of the interventions, shaped by geographic, infrastructural, and institutional factors. Angwaomaodoko (2023) similarly observed that the implementation of inclusive education in Nigeria remains at an early stage, hindered by inadequate resources and teacher shortage. This suggests that while interventions like assistive devices and sign-language training demonstrate positive outcomes, their reach and sustainability are inconsistent, affirming the need to strengthen institutional support and resource allocation.

A critical finding regarding the barriers to implementing inclusive education policies highlighted that financial constraints (32.8%) and lack of infrastructure (27.5%) were the most significant challenges identified. These two barriers alone accounted for over half of all responses, reaffirming the urgent need for resource mobilization and infrastructure development, corroborating findings by Yusuf and Rakiya (2024) and Ogunode and Belloh (2023), who identified inadequate funding and infrastructural deficiencies as major impediments to inclusive education in both basic and tertiary institutions. Other barriers included insufficiently trained staff (20.3%), cultural resistance (14.3%), and policy inconsistency (5.3%), which reflects those reported in Zubairu and Sarki (2023), emphasizing Nigeria's slow progress in preparing teachers and shifting public perceptions. These results amplify the quantitative trends and underscore the need for comprehensive investments in human and structural capital. These findings point to a multi-layered set of challenges that require coordinated responses. Interviews provided a richer context. An inclusion programme coordinator in Abuja explained, *"We don't have enough trained teachers, and in many schools, there are no ramps or accessible classrooms."* Meanwhile, a disability rights advocate from Sokoto added, *"Even when funding is available, cultural resistance makes it difficult. Families hide children with disabilities out of shame."* These testimonials amplify the quantitative results by revealing how material and societal obstacles converge to hinder policy implementation.

On the significance of these barriers, 56.3% of respondents rated them as very significant or significant, underscoring the urgent need to mitigate these obstacles. Similarly, when asked about sustainability, responses were mixed, suggesting varying levels of preparedness to continue the programs once external support phases out. This concern was echoed in interviews. A school principal in Kaduna noted, *"Some of the inclusive materials we received are already wearing out, and we haven't received guidance on how to replenish them."* Another informant from a donor agency observed, *"Sustainability depends on government buy-in. Without long-term national investment, it's difficult to see lasting impact."* This echoes Ogunode and Belloh's (2023) conclusion that policy implementation is inconsistent and plagued by poor monitoring. Thus, to ensure lasting impact, there must be clear sustainability frameworks, including maintenance protocols, government budgeting, and coordinated follow-up mechanisms.

While UNICEF's initiatives have made notable progress in promoting inclusive education for children with disabilities in Nigeria, the findings reveal several areas in need of improvement. Specifically, more effort is required in strengthening communication strategies, increasing resource allocation, and deepening stakeholder collaboration. The interview narratives add weight to the survey data by offering grounded realities and practical recommendations. These insights collectively serve as a valuable roadmap for enhancing the design, effectiveness, and sustainability of future interventions.

Conclusion

The analysis of UNICEF's inclusive education initiatives in Nigeria reveals significant progress alongside critical gaps. The programs have raised awareness and boosted enrollment of children with disabilities in

regions where they were effectively implemented. For instance, stakeholders in Lagos and Enugu reported higher enrollment after teachers received sign-language training and assistive devices were provided. However, the impact of these initiatives is uneven across Nigeria. Many communities remain unaware or underserved by UNICEF's programs. While some respondents rated program visibility and effectiveness as high, a substantial minority indicated that financial, infrastructural, and human-resource constraints limit these gains.

These findings have important implications. Inclusive education is a fundamental right and a key component of Nigeria's development goals under the SDGs. The evidence suggests that well-resourced and community-supported interventions can improve school inclusion for children with disabilities. Conversely, persistent barriers perpetuate exclusion and educational inequality. In practical terms, without sustained investment and coordination, Nigeria risks falling short of its commitments to ensure equitable education for all children. Inclusive education programs not only benefit individual learners but also advance social inclusion and national human capital development. Therefore, addressing the identified gaps is crucial for long-term educational success and societal equity.

Recommendations

Based on the study's conclusions, the following policy and practical recommendations are offered:

i. Targeted Outreach: Intensify community engagement in underserved regions. Collaborate with local leaders and NGOs to increase awareness of UNICEF's programs and encourage school enrollment for children with disabilities.
ii. Accessible Infrastructure: Invest in disability-friendly school facilities (ramps, accessible restrooms, adapted classrooms) and provide assistive technologies. Removing physical barriers is essential for enabling inclusion.
iii. Teacher Training: Expand professional development so educators are equipped with inclusive teaching strategies and the use of assistive devices, ensuring quality instruction for all learners.
iv. Sustainable Policy and Funding: Embed inclusive education in government budgets and strengthen monitoring of program implementation. Ensuring consistent funding and accountability will sustain progress.
v. Stakeholder Collaboration: Strengthen partnerships among government agencies, UNICEF, donors, and community organizations to coordinate efforts and adapt initiatives to local contexts.

By implementing these recommendations, UNICEF's initiatives can be refined and strengthened to create a more equitable education system for children with disabilities in Nigeria, ensuring sustainability and long-term impact.

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The Role Of Language Policy In Budget Allocation And Implementation In Public Secondary Schools In Lagos State, Nigeria: Prospects, Challenges And Panacea

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Abstract
This study investigated how budget allocation, execution, and the underlying institutional structure, which includes the role of language policy, interact in public secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study was motivated by the finding that budget implementation rates were notably high throughout the economic boom period from 2008 to 2016, showing a substantial reliance on macroeconomic stability. The primary objectives are to look at the concept and process of school-level budgeting, analyze current patterns of budget allocation and spending implementation, and identify significant, systemic problems that impede the effective and responsible use of public-school funds. The analysis demonstrates a positive correlation between the high rate of budget implementation over the review period and the nation's periods of economic boom. But the report also identifies important, enduring issues. These include ingrained corruption, the lack of strong and appropriate budget evaluation procedures, and the widespread disapproval of strict financial planning and adherence to established budgetary plans among certain school administrators. A critical analysis is also conducted of the possible advantages of efficient budgeting, including better resource management, increased financial discipline, and improved educational outcomes. In conclusion, practical and administrative issues remain significant barriers to consistent financial accountability, even though economic booms momentarily improve budget execution. In order to ensure efficient resource use and accountability, the paper offers a comprehensive solution, highlighting the critical need for strict government oversight, a fundamental change in school administrators' perspectives on fiscal planning, and increased required teacher participation in the budget formation and review cycles.
Keywords: Budget Allocation, Budget Implementation, Public Secondary Schools.

Introduction

Education is fundamental to achieving national goals and objectives, as it fosters a person's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development. This principle is central to Nigeria's National Strategy, as Ajeyalemi (2009), cited in Nwogu & Moses (2020), noted that the Federal Republic of Nigeria considers education a vital instrument for national development. Despite this recognition, underfunding from federal, state, and local governments is widely considered the most significant challenge currently facing secondary education. Due to this issue, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (Odigwe & Owan, 2019) recommends that nations allocate a minimum of 26% of their national budget to education. A budget is a strategic statement outlining an organization's projected revenue and expenditures. At its core, it is a crucial target-setting exercise. For educational institutions, this is particularly vital. According to Akinsolu (2018), a school's programs and curriculum can only be successfully implemented with adequate funding. This point is especially critical in Nigeria, where the government's education budget consistently falls short of global best

practices, rendering it insufficient to meet the sector's vast needs. Given these financial constraints, prudent financial management is not just a best practice but a necessity. School administrators must exercise extreme caution and judgment, accounting for every dollar spent. The effective planning and administration of school finances are arguably the most significant factors influencing the achievement of an institution's educational goals and objectives. In essence, a well-managed budget ensures that limited resources are allocated to their highest-impact uses, maximizing the potential for positive academic outcomes.

The comprehensive under-funding and general financial management of public secondary schools have received a lot of scholarly attention, but the school's official language policy is an important and frequently disregarded issue affecting resource allocation and expenditure. Language policy, as mandated by the National Policy on Education (NPE), requires that English be used as the medium of teaching starting in secondary school and that indigenous languages, the language of the immediate environment, be used for first education (Nwamara & Nwakacha, 2025). Despite its dual goals of promoting cultural heritage and global competency, this policy directly affects how money is allocated and used. For example, the policy affects how much money is needed for instructional materials, hiring and training specialized teachers, and even funding infrastructure development (e.g., setting up a language laboratory). The practical application of this policy becomes complicated in a multilingual metropolis like Lagos, potentially leading to a gap between the ideal pedagogical requirements of the language policy and the schools' actual financial capacity to meet those expectations. Additionally, the emphasis on English for certification tests such as WAEC and NECO frequently leads to an unwritten but actual policy of giving priority to English-language resources, which may cause the distribution of scarce finances to be skewed away from other important areas.

Despite the established link between effective financial management and the achievement of educational objectives and the clear language use rules of the National Policy on Education, there is a significant study gap concerning the interaction between these two essential elements. The literature now in publication covers educational budgeting shortfalls and general management of language policy in great detail. However, there is a glaring dearth of empirical research that systematically investigates the precise ways in which the mandatory language policy impacts both its practical, often controversial implementation in a diverse metropolitan setting like Lagos, as well as the actual process of budget allocation and implementation in public secondary schools (Adebayo, 2021). There are still important unanswered questions: Does the need to purchase materials in both local and English languages place a burden on the budget? Does language-specific training receive a disproportionate amount of funding? How can school administrators strike a compromise between the demands of promoting indigenous languages and the necessity of giving English priority for academic achievement? This study attempts to close this important information gap by looking at how language policy affects budget allocation and implementation in Lagos' public secondary schools. By doing this, it will provide evidence-based insights into the complex challenges administrators face when attempting to utilize limited financial resources while adhering to national linguistic and educational criteria.

Progressive Theory of Public Expenditure

The theoretical framework for this paper is the Progressive Theory of Public Expenditure, a concept developed by Mabel Walker in 1937. According to Ortynsky (2023), this theory is one of the earliest attempts to establish a positive budget theory, offering a valuable lens for examining the evolution of budgetary thought. The theory's core relevance lies in its emphasis on aspects of budgeting. It prioritizes the practical usefulness of a budget, focusing on its ability to serve as a meaningful tool for decision-making, and it highlights the importance of comparing budget figures to assess performance, trends, and efficiency over time. The theory shifts the focus from mere financial figures to the actual outcomes and accomplishments achieved through public spending and it is grounded in the idea that budgets should not just maintain the status quo but actively promote improvement and development (Bogsnes, 2016). This study explores how budgets in public secondary schools can be structured not just for financial accountability but as instruments for measuring progress and achieving developmental goals.

Aladejebi (2016) reiterated that the theory was based on an economic thought, particularly the aspect of marginal utility, to be tested through statistical data analysis sufficient to be descriptive. The theory aids in decision-making for the allocation of government expenditure. This practical understanding could result from the idea of marginal utility as a way to determine the appropriate distribution of government expenditure. The theory examines the standard of living in terms of the number and quality of services provided by the government. The theory is centered on the premise that the means to decide how to allocate between options is through the “Utilitarian Ideal” as applied to government budgets (Egbunike & Unamma, 2017). The Utilitarian Ideal is a measure of the current expenditure as an expression of balance between demand and Government

service provision. This theory advocates for a cordial relationship between the budget planners and the budget implementers for content and regular increase in budgetary allocations as a necessary condition for any budget implementation to have ultimate results (Frank, 2018).

Concept of Budget

According to Mac-Barango & Zubairu (2022), the budgeting for secondary schools' physical infrastructure is one of the trade-offs, which the government can opt for in the course of allocating resources towards the accomplishment of its objectives in a particular year. Financing, as well as the mode and procedures of allocating capital funds, are potent variables for consideration during the planning of educational systems and meeting the requirements of physical infrastructure: Capital financing/ budgeting allocation exercise is, in turn, guided by an analytic process. The Analytic process during a budgetary allocation exercise fundamentally involves economic as well as financial measures targeted towards the accomplishment of the objectives of the government in a particular year. However, a number of issues and roadblocks have complicated capital finance and budgeting for the construction of secondary schools' physical infrastructure. The scenario is made worse by the capital-intensive structure of the industry, its lengthy gestation period, the distinctiveness of each product's production process, and the variations in the features of production sites. The current state of affairs can be summed up as follows: an underfunded, overcrowded, and constantly growing population, which has resulted in inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of schools, and decadence within the educational subsector (Mac-Barango & Zubairu, 2022). According to Ogundele & Ajia (2017), a budget is a financial representation of an educational program's course of study and is linked to the program's goals and objectives. The budget, according to the authors, is a useful instrument for educational planning that helps achieve learning objectives.

The Challenges of Budget Allocation and Implementation in Public Secondary Schools in Lagos State

A lack of capacity and overly optimistic projections might lead to inadequate revenue, which can impede budget performance and execution, among other issues. The majority of people's standard of living would increase with a well-executed budget at every level, thanks to the supply of basic public goods and services like health care, education, and excellent physical infrastructure like roads, water, and electricity, among others (Hammayo *et al.*, 2020). Politics in the administration of educational institutions: Frequently, the current government may not view the budget as a solid commitment and may alter it as it pleases. As Ogundele (2018) correctly pointed out, the government's needless political meddling results in an ambiguous budget that is constantly changed by the ministry of education and its overseeing agencies. The author also pointed out that because of the vested government's personal interests, political instability can undermine consistency and result in perpetual change.

The disapproving attitude of the school administrators toward the budgetary plans is demonstrated by Amirize & Ololube (2018), who claim that the majority of educational administrators do not bother to assign monitoring and control to experts. Instead, they put the budget implementation in the hands of the schools and finance clerks. As a result, the issue causes a high rate of embezzlement as well as the misuse and misplacement of budgetary items. The majority of school administrators have not been able to carry out their duties in using the budget as a control mechanism for educational policy because they are not familiar with the financial ethnic laws and regulations. Deficits in the budget evaluation: If the budget is not properly evaluated and appraised, it will not be effective. The majority of budget implementations, according to Wami (2024), are not adequately reviewed, which results in the misappropriation of monies required for the provision of educational resources. The budget's design and implementation become convoluted and unclear when extraneous features are included (Pardawala, 2024). Inadequate execution of the budget: If a well-planned and competent financial program is not executed correctly, it will not accomplish the desired educational outcomes.

Effective implementation is necessary for the budgetary program to succeed. Iloh & Amadi (2022), pointed out that in order for a budget to be established and carried out effectively, all stakeholders must be fully involved.

The majority of Nigeria's industries are being impacted by the social issue of corruption. The misuse and underutilization of money designated for the enhancement of the educational system have also affected the educational sector. According to Aidelomon (2016), corruption can appear systemic at first, but over time it will have an impact on every aspect of an institution's or society's existence. Therefore, corruption can restrict an institution's objectives and lead to waste. A portion of the funding allocated for the delivery of high-quality education is occasionally hijacked, while at other times it is redirected for personal gain. The result of this is that there are not enough resources to manage secondary education.

Evidence shows an increasing rise in the total population of the African continent, and, in particular, the school age population is increasing at the rate of 2.5 to 3% per annum and enrolment into schools is on the increase annually (Asante, 2024). Therefore, an increased population has made it more difficult to prepare appropriately

for secondary school pupils to receive a high-quality education. Over the past forty years, the number of students enrolled in secondary schools has risen above the amount of funding allocated to this grade of education. The population explosion brought on by a variety of social, religious, and cultural views has consequently made it challenging to adequately fund secondary education. Poor forecasting is another challenge facing budgeting in schools. Forecasting is crucial for determining the number of pupils the school can have and the quantity of resources it will require to meet their educational needs. It has been challenging to conduct out sufficient forecasting of needed resources and programs for the improvement of secondary education in Nigeria due to a number of factors, including the ability to keep records and perform trend analysis. Adetomiwa (2020), noted that one obstacle to the computerization of educational data has been the issue of record keeping. This has hindered the nation's capacity to create suitable plans for its schools.

According to Ogunjobi *et al.* (2021), infrastructures play a significant role in the provision of quality education in any nation. They facilitate the transfer, absorption, and diffusion of knowledge. However, if money isn't available for these amenities to be provided and maintained, it can lead to the deterioration of already-existing structures from wear and tear and neglect. Funding is also needed to update school facilities and make them functional in accordance with contemporary trends. One advantage of funding is that it may be used to inspire employees in a work setting. Mehrad (2020) asserts that one of the hygienic aspects that encourage employees to work is pay. When this is not forthcoming, employees' degree of devotion to the company declines. Workers' willingness to work is stimulated when salaries and other benefits are paid on schedule and in sufficient amounts. Therefore, funding is required in order to inspire employees' devotion at work. Lack of this reward will lead to a low degree of dedication to work.

Prospects of Budget Allocation and Implementation in Public Secondary Schools in Lagos State

Budgets are one of the instruments used by governments everywhere to promote development for the populace. A budget is a yearly financial statement that is frequently approved by the legislature and shows the government's projected income and outlays for a certain fiscal year. The projected government receipts and outlays for the upcoming fiscal year are estimated in this paper. The government utilizes the budget as a tool to define social and economic priorities and to determine the course of the economy.

According to Esther *et al.* (2022), the budget serves as an instrument of economic policy, a tool of management, and a tool of accountability and transparency. A budget is typically used to provide citizens with the dividends of democracy by allocating funds for things like housing, water, healthcare, roads, and education, among other things. The citizens' main topic of discussion is the implementation of the budget by all levels of government. The public does not generally have a good understanding of the precise performance level or budgetary implementation. The government would be helped in identifying problem areas if it knew the performance and implementation of the budget from the prior year. The amount of money available in the state coffers directly correlates with the percentage of the budget that the government allots to each sector of the economy. Nigeria has seen significant declines in government revenue, possibly as a result of declining oil income, which has had an impact on funding for various sectors, including the education system.

It is important to highlight that value added tax from federation accounts generates more revenue for the Lagos State Government than does statutory allotment. This is because the state, which serves as Nigeria's industrial and commercial hub, generates a sizable portion of the value-added tax, and this contribution serves as a key foundation for the distribution of VAT revenue among the member states of the federation. With planned capital and recurrent expenses of N2, 426,041,000 and N1, 885,720,000, respectively, the total projected expenditure for the period was N4, 311,761,000. This demonstrates that during the time, the total planned capital and recurrent expenditures were 56% and 44%, respectively (Nyarko-Asomani *et al*., 2019)

With N3, 414, 482, 000 being the actual sum spent, 79% of the projected expenses were met. This is in good comparison to Delta State's actual total expenditure performance, which averaged 65.7% between 1991 and 2010 (Inalegwu, 2016). There was a N399, 187,000 finance shortfall from 2008 to 2016, when the entire actual revenue of N3,015, 187,000 is contrasted with the actual expenditure of N3,414,482,000. While N1, 680,198,000 was spent on recurrent expenses, N1, 734,284,000 was allocated to capital expenditures. 50.7% of the total amount spent throughout the period is represented by the total actual capital expenditure. This suggests that the state's physical development accounted for roughly 50.7% of all expenditures..

To increase accountability and performance, government should always monitor and follow up on budget implementations in the areas of spending and operations; second, government should be able to account for budget variances to track performance progress and build alignment around goals; third, local government should always use performance measures to monitor resource use, outputs, and the community's benefits of budget implementation; fourth, government should encourage the use of performance data for budget decision-

making; fifth, the use of a balanced scorecard should link government strategic plans to the overall goals; and last, feedback regarding performance evaluation should always be provided to uncover new insights, foster accountability, and enhance overall.

Conclusion

Effective money management is becoming more and more difficult for modern organizations and schools in the world of rising inflation. This includes school budget management. The management of school finances and budgets becomes crucial for nearly all institutions. But managing the finances and budget of the school is always one of the biggest challenges. Thankfully, technology has made it possible to provide online school management system features that efficiently address the needs of educational institutions. Modern educational institutions, however, must devise practical plans and tactics to overcome their budgetary obstacles. In addition to managing the finances for school, you must find a practical way to meet the demands of the present.

Before seeking answers, the school administration should be aware of the problems with the current setup. The administrative tasks in traditional schools currently require people. In addition to being slow, the pen and paper method has problems with transparency. Schools are under a lot of pressure to maintain their prices at this level for a minimum of one year, even with these obstacles. Upgrading their school system with contemporary technology is the next step after school management is aware of the present difficulties. Financial management and the demands of the schools today should guide the creation of the budget. However, the manual approach to budget planning is time-consuming and frequently unsuccessful when faced with contemporary issues. In order to know their monthly budget, school administrators should use budget planning software. The first step in creating a budget is to identify the needs and issues that the school is currently facing. Next, create a plan of action by cutting the costs associated with running the school.

The Way Forward

To have a successful budget implementation in public secondary schools in Lagos State, the following suggestions and recommendations should be considered by both budget planners and implementers;

1. To have a successful budget implementation, the government needs to make adequate budget allocation available to the education sector, especially secondary education in Lagos State.
2. A cordial relationship should be maintained between the budget planners and implementers for a constant and regular increase in budgetary allocation.
3. The Lagos State Ministry of Education and the School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) should establish a separate, ring-fenced budget line specifically for the development, purchase, and maintenance of indigenous language materials (Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, and other regional languages).
4. The spending benchmark should be set and strictly maintained, so that it can serve as a check for both budget planners and implementers.
5. The techniques adopted by the government in the allocation of funds to education should be spelled out for the stakeholders concerned.
6. Principals' involvement in the budgetary preparation and implementation stages should be mandated, since they are considered the most important and accounting officers who have significant influence in achieving secondary education goals.
7. To enhance accountability, the Lagos State Education Board must mandate an annual financial audit and public reporting component focused specifically on language policy compliance in budget utilization.

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Peer Group Communication and Substance Use Behaviour among Internal Migrant Workers in Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State

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Abstract
Substance use has become an increased national health issue in Nigeria, especially among those exposed to social and economic stressors, such as internal migrant workers. Although it has been established that there is peer pressure on substance use among adolescents and students, little is known on how peer group communication influences the behaviours of adult migrants. This study investigated the correlation between peer group communication and substance use behaviour among Hausa migrant workers in Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State. The study was guided by four objectives which were to identify the patterns of substance use behaviour, investigate the role of peer group communication in influencing the initiation into substance use, assess how peer communication networks shape the frequency of substances used, and determine the extent to which peer group communication influences perceptions of risk and acceptability of substance use among internal migrant workers. The study adopted a qualitative design; using in-depth interviews with twelve respondents identified through snowball sampling. Interviews were conducted in Hausa and Pidgin English, with a research assistant who facilitated translation when necessary. Data were analysed thematically, guided by the research objectives. The results showed that alcohol, cigarettes, and locally distilled spirits were the most common patterns of substance use, taken in the context of a social event and after work. The initiation was strongly affected by peer communication, informal encouragement, observation, and storytelling normalised first-time use. Structured peer routines and repeated social invitations influenced frequency of substance use and peer discussions lowered perceived risk and augmented social acceptability. The study aligns with the Social Learning Theory where behaviours are learned, modelled and strengthened through peer interaction. The study recommended the importance of peer networks in predicting substance use behaviours in internal migrant workers and the necessity to use culturally sensitive and peer-informed interventions.
Keywords: Peer Communication, Substance Use, Internal Migrant Workers, Hausa, Oye-Ekiti

Introduction

Substance use remains a major public health concern globally, contributing to morbidity, mortality, social dysfunction, and economic costs (World Health Organization, 2018).The prevalence of substance use disorder is increasing in West Africa, especially in Nigeria, as illicit drug markets are becoming more heterogeneous and the burden of harm is growing. The United Nations' Office on Drugs and Crime estimates that the prevalence of drug use in Nigeria is 14.4% in total and over three million Nigerians require treatment or assistance with drug use disorders (UNODC, 2025). Socioeconomic pressure, migration, peer influences, and psychosocial pressures are some of the factors that exacerbate these trends (Molobe & Odukoya, 2021; Igbineweka and Tari, 2023).

Work-related internal migration is a mainstream survival policy within Nigeria, particularly in State like Ekiti, whereby people leave rural or less economically productive regions and relocate to semi-urban and urban locations in search of job opportunities (Akre, Ticha, & Dantani, 2022). Migration, however, is usually associated with changes, such as loss of traditional support systems, exposure to new and sometimes loose peer groups, lack of stable accommodation and stable income, and heightened psychosocial stress. Substance use can become a coping mechanism or a social practise, or even an identity and a sign of belonging in such settings (Molobe & Odukoya, 2021).

Peer group communication has been found to be a strong determinant of substance use behaviour. For instance, peer influence and self-esteem were identified to be important predictors of substance abuse among adolescents in secondary schools in Nigeria. The adolescents who had more positive perceptions of their peers using substances and less self-esteem had higher chances of reporting the use of substances (Igbineweka and Tari, 2023). Similarly, Zaki, Oke, and Aishayunusa (2020) also found that peer group influence had a great influence on the attitudes and participation of adolescents in substance abuse in Nasarawa State. At the third level of education, Adewuyi and Akinsola (2013) showed that peer influence was greatly linked to substance abuse among undergraduates in Lagos State University and that gender difference affected peer pressure. Moreover,

Molobe and Odukoya (2021) discovered that among irregular migrant returnees in Nigeria, 61.3% had used drugs in the process of migration with such factors as traumatic experiences, frustration, and being stranded being contributing factors to drug use. These results highlight the relevance of peer processes and stress due to migration in the development of substance use behaviours.

Despite these insights, the majority of the current studies concentrate on either adolescents in the institutional context (secondary schools, universities) or on international/irregular migrants but not on internal migrant workers in Nigeria. Little empirical research has been done regarding the impact of peer group communication on initiation, frequency, and type of substance use among internal migrants in semi-urban communities. Informal peer communication networks in major towns within Nigeria like Oye-Ekiti, which have migrant workers both within and outside Ekiti State, are probably powerful but have not been well examined. Such lack of contextual evidence leaves a gap in knowledge that compromises the design of specific interventions. In the absence of strong empirical evidence, prevention and treatment programmes will be based on research on adolescents or students, which may not fully reflect the facts of internal migrant workers. This study, therefore, investigated the relationship between peer group interactions and substance use behaviour among internal migrant workers in Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State.

Research Objectives

i. Identify the patterns of substance use behaviour among internal migrant workers in Oye-Ekiti?
ii. Investigate the role of peer group communication in influencing the initiation into substance use among internal migrant workers?
iii. Assess how peer communication networks shape the frequency of substances used among internal migrant workers?
iv. Determine the extent to which peer group communication influences perceptions of risk and acceptability of substance use among internal migrant workers?

Literature Review

Among the adolescents in Nigeria, peer influence is a predictable predictor of substance use. In a study conducted by Igbineweka and Tari (2023) in Ovia North-East, Edo State, a significant relationship was discovered between the perceptions of the adolescents and their likelihood to abuse substances; adolescents with lower self-esteem and a perception of greater substance use in their peer groups had a significant likelihood of abusing substances themselves. Equally, a study conducted in Abia State by Ejikem, Ekeleme, Uwakwe, Iwuoha (2023) also illustrated that the most significant predictor of psychoactive substance use was peer usage among adolescents in urban and rural areas; adolescents whose friends used drugs were more than seventeen times more likely to use themselves. These results highlight the fact that peer communication (both direct and indirect) is very powerful in terms of initiating and increasing use of substances among the youth population groups.

Studies on migrant worker populations and internal migration processes are not often studied in Nigeria, though the literature on this issue is quite abundant in school or adolescent contexts. For instance, Adewuyi and Akinsola (2013) investigated substance abuse among undergraduates in Lagos State University; they found that gender and peer influence were significant predictors of use, but the population was institutional (university students) and not working migrants. On the contrary, Molobe and Odukoya (2021) concentrated on irregular migrant returns who had moved abroad. They stated that 61.3 percent of the returnees had used drugs in the process of migration with anger, trauma and being left as the most common reasons. Despite the fact that this study centres on migration, it is international irregular migration and patterns of peer communication between internal migrants have not been researched.

Comparative studies (urban vs. rural) also point to peer influence as an issue where it continues to be important regardless of the geographical setting. In Abia State, Ejikem, et al. (2023) reported similar trends in psychoactive substance initiation among adolescents both in rural and urban settings with peer use being the most important predictor. Ekekezie, Daramola and Olatona (2023) in the University of Lagos reported a prevalence rate of 36.7% of substance use among undergraduates; with peer pressure coming out as the most common justification to substance use. These results are representative of the fact that peer influences are endemic and significant in various contexts and groups of people.

Although the evidence is strong in the adolescent and student populations, little research has been done in the area of internal migrant workers in semi-urban towns in Nigeria and the influence of peer group communication on substance use behaviours among them. The article by Molobe and Odukaya (2021) provides a perspective on stressors associated with the migration process and substance use, but it is based on irregular migrant returning populations instead of internal migrant working environments. There is no systematic investigation of the

nature of peer communication (such as: frequency of contact, content of conversation, normative beliefs, peer group size) and how this might depend on gender, age, or length of stay in migrant environments.
While there is a compelling evidence that peer effect and peer use are predictive of substance use in adolescents and students in Nigeria, and there is some evidence that migration (particularly international irregular migration) increases susceptibility, there is an evident gap in the internal migrant worker in semi-urban towns. In particular, little is known about the role of peer group communication among internal migrant workers including the kind of messages are exchanged, under what norms, how frequently, by whom, and how the communications are associated with initiation, continuation, or increase in substance use.This study filled the gap by focusing on internal migrant workers in Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State.

Theoretical Review
This study is leaned on the Social Learning Theory. The social learning theory was propounded by Albert Bandura in1977as a continuation of the behavioural learning theories. This theory highlights that, an individual can learn through not only direct reinforcement, but also through observation, imitation and modelling of behaviours of other individuals (Bandura, 1977). Contrary to the classical behaviourist methods, Bandura also believed that the behaviour of human beings occurs in a reciprocal interaction of cognitive, behavioural and environmental factors, which he called reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1986). Under this model, individuals obtain knowledge through observing the actions of other people, assessing the outcomes of such actions and subsequently, they make decisions on whether to follow the same action or not. According to Bandura, observational learning is based on four processes, namely attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. Attention is the capacity of the individual to concentrate on a modelled behaviour; retention is the capacity to recall the behaviour; reproduction is the ability to imitate the behaviour and motivation is motivated by the anticipation of rewards or punishment (Bandura, 1986). Notably, reinforcement may be direct (personal experience of being rewarded or punished), vicarious (observing other people being rewarded or punished) or self-reinforcement (self-evaluation and internal standards).
The Social Learning Theory thus provides a compromise between the behaviourist and cognitive approaches where individuals are viewed to actively interpret and internalise social information and then act before they can do something. The Social Learning Theory offers an effective model of explaining how internal migrant workers can develop substance use behaviours due to communication and interaction with peer groups. The migrant workers tend to lose their traditional social support system and become a part of new peer groups where adaptation strategies are highly influenced by communication and observation. When members of these networks consume substances, and convey positive messages about their use, new members might become more likely to notice, learn and copy such behaviours, especially when such behaviours are socially reinforced in the group.

Materials and Methodology
This study employed a qualitative research design, using in-depth interviews. The population consists of all Hausa migrant workers in Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State. The focus on Hausa immigrants was informed by their high population in the southern towns in Nigeria where they usually practise artisanal trade, including shoemaking, tailoring and trading. These professions help in the establishment of tight peer communities, so they are the best when trying to study the role of peer communication in substance use behaviours. However, the exact size of this population cannot be ascertained due to the absence of official data because of the largely informal nature of their settlement and employment.
Recognizing the difficulty in establishing a sampling frame, a sample of twelve respondents was deemed appropriate, consistent with qualitative traditions that rely on smaller, information-rich samples capable of generating thematic saturation (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Sampling was carried out through snowball sampling, beginning with one Hausa shoemaker, a long-term resident of Oye-Ekiti who was well-connected within the migrant community and who served as a gatekeeper by introducing the researcher to other respondents until the required sample size was reached. The snowballing method was very appropriate in this case since the target group is a difficult to access area with a well-established internal network and cultural gate-keeping that allows access through trust. The semi-structured interview guide was used in data collection by enabling open-ended inquiry into the participants on their migration history, patterns of peer communication, and their experience of substance use.
The interviews were done on an individual basis and in a conducive environment to the interviewees in a mixture of Pidgin English and Hausa language to ensure better understanding and ease. To be accurate and culturally sensitive in the collection of data, a trained Hausa-speaking research assistant was employed with the

role of translation and interpretation where needed. Interviews were audio-taped with the respondents' permission and subsequently transcribed word-to-word where after they were translated into the English language and analysed.

Thematic analysis was done in line with six steps suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) to code and interpret patterns in the data in a systematic way, leading to a subtle comprehension of the impact of peer group communication on substance use. Ethical issues were observed during the study. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants, their anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed by using pseudonyms, and the participants were told that they could withdraw at any point.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Theme 1: Patterns of Substance Use Behaviour among Internal Migrant Workers

The in-depth interviews indicated that substance use among Hausa internal migrant workers in Oye-Ekiti is a patterned, socially embedded, and work practise, peer interaction, and environmental context-related. The interviews revealed that the migrants were involved in various substances such as alcohol, cigarettes, local drinks like *ogogoro*, kola nut preparations and, in fact, tramadol in some instances. The use of these substances was usually done in the free time of the groups, after work or in informal groups in workshops and markets. The narratives have shown that substance use is a social habit as well as a coping strategy and is determined by the demands to fit in peer networks and adjusting to the demands of living out of home.

Explaining further on the trends of substance use, one 28-year-old shoemaker stated:

"When I came first in Oye-Ekiti I never drank or smoked. I was concentrating on my job and money sent back home. However, my workmates in the workshop welcomed me to play with them after work. I have tried it once, then twice, and in no long time it became routine. We drink together as we unwind and connect after a hard working day."

Another participant, a 31-year-old trader, explained:

"We meet sometimes after the sale of goods at the market. We smoke, drink or occasionally drink ogogoro. The frequency is based on the amount of money and the availability of all people. I am not a daily drinker, but whenever we get together it is a requirement to be with the group. You are under the pressure to fit in since it makes you feel like you belong."

A 33-year-old artisan added:

"I do not drink recklessly since I have to take care of my home. I do not drink frequently and only when friends invite me to drink and in some cases, I drink a little to avoid being rude. However, it is hard to say no since friends will want to know why you do not want to join. Taking alcohol is not only fun but it is our friendship and social life."

These show that the patterns of substance use among the Hausa migrant workers are socially mediated. Substance use is usually initiated by curiosity or peer influence, but further use is bolstered by routines and group identification.

Another 30-year-old cobbler stressed:

"Some of us meet at the workshop every evening. When I fail to do so, they consider me as being different or unfriendly. We take drinks and occasionally smoke together as this is our bonding and after the work day. It is not coerced, and not to belong is like not belonging."

Participants also emphasised the moderation strategies that were influenced by the personal situation. The nature and amount of substance consumed was affected by financial limitations, family, and work schedules.

A 32-year-old trader mentioned:

"I primarily drink during weekends or when I have spare money. My daily drinking habit is avoided since I have to save to remit money home. However, when my friends ask me to attend, I do so a bit so that I do not appear disrespectful or out of touch with the group."

Another aspect of substance use that was revealed during the interviews was that it acts as a form of social bonding, as well as a form of stress relief. Most of the respondents explained that they practised these behaviours when they had a long working day, as a form of relieving stress, sharing experiences, and acceptance in peer groups.

The results indicate that the use of substances by Hausa migrant workers in Oye-Ekiti is contextual, socially influenced and organised. Peer expectations, social integration requirements and individual responsibilities mediate participation, and substance use is a complex interaction of social, occupational and personal concerns.

Theme 2: Role of Peer Group Communication in Influencing the Initiation into Substance Use

Peer group communication has been found to be a key factor in the initiation of substance use among Hausa internal migrant workers in Oye-Ekiti. The respondents were also in unison that it was through peer influence, talks and informal advice that made them decide to give a first time try to alcohol, cigarettes, *ogogoro* and other substances. These socializations usually took place in workshops, marketplaces or in community recreational time, where associates discussed their experiences, promoted experimentation, and made substance use a social activity.

A 28-year-old shoemaker explained this process:

"When I first arrived in Oye-Ekiti, I did not drink or smoke. However, one day, a friend invited me to have a drink at the end of the workday. Initially, I declined but they continued giving reasons that it is normal, everybody does it after work to relax. They said it helps you fit in. I made one attempt, and thereafter I participated more. It is unlikely that I would have begun without their invitation.

A 31-year-old trader, another respondent, explained the influence of peers in less obvious terms:

"Nobody forces you; it is not like that. They simply discuss what they have done after work sometimes laughing and joking about the drinks or smoking. You are intrigued and would like to be a part of it. They persuade you even when you say no, and tell you that it is a thing about being friends. We all begin because of these informal talks, not because somebody made us."

One of the artisans stressed the mixture of verbal encouragement and observational learning:

"I observed the way my friends drank and smoked together, laughed and told stories. They also discussed the way it assists them to relax after a day of work. When I was once in it, I saw that I could enjoy it, and then it became less difficult to take part. Peer communication shows you how things are done, what is acceptable, and what is normal in the group."

According to the respondents, peer encouragement was usually not just verbal. Body language, hospitality, and common practices were relevant in indicating acceptance and belonging.

Some of the respondents also stated that peer communication served to cope with fears or substance insecurities. A 32-year-old trader said:

"My initial concern was about drinking as I had never done it before. My friends told me that it is fine to take a small amount of it, taught me how to drink it slowly, and told me that it is normal. They said that all things are small and become. This support helped me to feel less afraid and ashamed to attempt."

Based on these descriptions, it is clear that peer group communication is one of the major ways of initiating substance use among internal migrant workers. It works by using a combination of verbal persuasion, observational learning, ritual participation and social inclusion. Information and social reinforcement are offered by peers, and it minimises perceived risks, normalises substance use behaviours and assimilates newcomers into the social environment. The results show that peer networks and communication practises play a major role in initiation into substance use among Hausa migrant workers.

Theme 3: Influence of Peer Communication Networks on Frequency of Substance Use

The in-depth interviews showed that peer communication networks are important in determining the prevalence of substance use among Hausa internal migrant workers. According to the respondents, frequent contact in peer groups normalises substance use, as well as provides opportunities and anticipations to participate. The frequency of use was reported to fluctuate depending on the schedules in peer groups, work schedules, and social events, most of them reporting that the levels of substance use rose in bigger groups or during mutual celebrations.

An example of how the frequency is affected by peer communication was provided by a 28-year-old shoemaker:

"When I became a part of the group, I realised that some of my friends would meet after work in the evening to smoke and drink. Initially, I used to attend once or twice a week but since they continued to invite me it became almost every evening. I would have preferred to be a part of the talks and jokes about missing out. I had no intentions of drinking so often, but it was easy to do in their company."

Another respondent introspected the peer interactions as the way to organise substance use patterns:

"It is based on the people and the activity of the group. We at times meet up after selling products at the market and we all smoke or drink. When a new individual comes such as when I first came, they tell us how we do things and when to join. The longer you hang around their place, the more you attend. Neither is it imposed but the peer communication dictates the rate of usage."

One artisan explained that peer networks provided both chance and anticipation to use substances:

"In the shop, we would never cease chatting and laughing about what we did last night- drinking, smoking, telling stories. Such discussions are easy to make decisions on joining the next time. Failure to join, people will

inquire why and you will feel excluded. The peer communication teaches how and how frequently you use the substances."

The respondents stressed that frequency was affected by social norms and common routines in peer networks. A number of the respondents emphasised that the frequency of use is moderated by personal and financial factors, yet peer communication remains a determining factor in sustaining the participation.

From the respondents' accounts, it is clear that peer communication networks play a role of facilitators and controllers of substance use frequency. They give details on how and when to attend, build social norms to expect attendance at a gathering and reaffirm practises that make substance use a part of daily or weekly routine.

Theme 4: Peer Group Communication and Perceptions of Risk and Acceptability of Substance Use

The in-depth interviews indicated that peer group communication has a significant influence on the perception of internal migrant workers regarding risks of using substances and social acceptability of the behaviours. Participants repeatedly reported that discussions, experience sharing, and peer pressure were the factors that made them consider some substances as harmful or acceptable in their society. The peer relationships tended to reduce the perceived risk and put the substance use in the context of normality of everyday life in the migrant group.

A 28-year-old shoemaker explained how peer communication affected his risk perception:

"When I began taking tramadol and smoking, I was concerned about my health. But my friends told me that it is normal, that everybody drinks little and nothing occurs. They presented themselves and their experiences and said that they have been drinking or smoking for years and they are okay. These discussions made me believe that it is not risky, at least when you do it cautiously. The group helped me realise that it is good and safe up to a point."

A 31-year-old trader, who was also another participant, expounded the role of social validation in influencing the formation of perceptions of acceptability:

"We never cease to discuss the things we should and the things we should not do. When a person takes too much, we will make fun of him, but we also tell that it is okay to drink together. The group also makes you know what is acceptable. I believe that it is fine when I observe that other people do it on a regular basis and nothing troubles them. Peer communication comforts you and draws the lines."

Another respondent pointed out that peer conversations served to normalise the use of the substance and also gave informal advice on how to use it sparingly:

"I also hear my friends occasionally talking of how people got into trouble by drinking too much. However, largely we exchange suggestions how not to get in trouble, drink at a slow pace, do not combine too many drugs, and only go when we need to. Peer communication shows you the way to do it safely and shows it to be socially acceptable."

Respondents also reported peer communication as having an effect on the work and social responsibility-related attitudes towards risk.

This showed that peer communication networks are used as a social calibration system, which assists migrant workers to make sense of risks and give limits to what is socially acceptable. According to the respondents, the collective narratives, counselling, and support of peers gave them a feeling of safety and normalcy in engaging in substance use whilst implicitly teaching them moderation. Significantly, the peer influence was not limited to the direct involvement but influenced the beliefs regarding health, social reputation, and acceptance in the migrant community.

Discussion of Findings

The first objective sought to identify the patterns of substance use behaviour among internal migrant workers. Data revealed that the most abused substances were alcohol, cigarettes and locally distilled spirits (ogogoro) with the usage habits varying between occasional social use to almost daily use. According to the respondents, drinking was common after working hours, in group events and on festive days or market days. These trends show that substance use is a social and recreational practise, which is ingrained in the everyday life of migrants. These results are in line with the existing studies on peer-influenced substance use, especially studies on adolescents and young adults in Nigeria. For instance, Igbineweka and Tari (2023) found that the frequency and the initiation into substance use among adolescents of Ovia North-East, Edo State is highly predicted by peer usage. On the same note, Ejikem, Ekeleme, Uwakwe, and Iwuoha (2023) observed that teenagers in whom peers engage in the use of psychoactive substances had a high probability of using them themselves. Although these studies concentrate on youth population, the trends that are found in the current study can be applied to an adult population of migrant workers and the need to understand that social and communal environments have a bigger

impact than formalised institutions like schools or universities. The patterns recorded among internal migrants are consistent with Social Learning Theory because the respondents reported acquiring substance use behaviours among the peer group, modelling the behaviour, and reinforcing the behaviour with the help of group inclusion and social approval. The results prove the idea that substance use is not an individual decision but a socially mediated behaviour that is learnt during interpersonal interactions.

The second objective examined how peer group communication influences the initiation into substance use. Findings suggested that the initiation is mostly influenced by the invitations from peers, informal encouragement, and the discussion of alcohol and cigarettes as normal. In all instances, the participants said that they were first introduced to substances when interacting with others in workshops, markets, and social events. Notably, such messages tended to alleviate fears of substance use and position use as a way of social acceptance and belonging. These results are consistent with previous studies on the adolescents. It was shown by Igbineweka and Tari (2023) that direct and perceived peer substance use is a strong predictor of initiation, especially in the case of low self-esteem. Likewise, Adewuyi and Akinsola (2013) found that social dynamics, as well as peer influence, were strong predictors of substance use among the undergraduates.

Although the studies are institutionalised, the implications of the present findings are that the impact of peer communication can be applied to adult migrant groups; therefore, peer-mediated initiation is a universal process between age groups and environments. This is in line with Social Learning Theory in the sense that the respondents reported seeing their peers taking substances, being verbally encouraged, and seeing the reward as social acceptance. These observations and reinforcements reflect the theory concepts of observational learning and modelling as they show that peer communication is an instructional and normative process of initiating substance use.

Furthermore, the study explored how peer networks shape the frequency of substance use. Findings revealed that the frequency is strongly dependent on the organised routines in peer groups, such as after-work socialisation, socialisation on weekends, and market-day get-together. The respondents reported that the frequency of use was more common when repeatedly invited, the expectation of the group, and common rituals, whereas the intensity of participation was mediated by the proximity of the relationships. Peer communication offered peer pressure and advice, which made regular consumption normal as a way of life in the community. These results support previous studies on the adolescent and student groups.

According to Ejikem, et al. (2023), the frequency of psychoactive substances is a prevailing predictor of peer usage in both the urban and rural youth settings. Adewuyi and Akinsola (2013) also emphasised the fact that peer networks support patterns of frequent use in university students. Whereas institutionalised settings have been the subject matter of previous studies, this study will affirm that the structured peer communication networks retain their potency in the adult migrant work environments, highlighting the social connections with substance use. This affirms Social Learning Theory because migrant workers do not just follow the peer behaviours but are also subjected to continuous social reinforcement, entrenching routine use.

The last objective addressed the influence of peer group communication on perceptions of risk and social acceptability of substance use. According to the respondents, peer interaction normalised the consumption, perceived less health risk and presented the use as socially acceptable. The informal guidelines of moderation were spread through humour, narration, and collective experiences within the group and implicitly justified the behaviour. The participants stated that these messages influenced cognitive evaluations of harm and normative attitudes of acceptability. These results are in line with the existing studies on peer influence within Nigeria. Ekekezie, Daramola, and Olatona (2023) discovered that peer pressure influences perceptions of normative behaviour and risk among undergraduates, whereas Molobe and Odukoya (2021) emphasized that migration-related stressors are factors that drive substance use among irregular migrant returnees.

The foregoing observations are furthered to internal migrant workers in the current study with an emphasis on the centrality of peer communication in mediating between risk perception and normative acceptance. The perceived risk decrease is in line with the social learning theory principles of vicarious reinforcement, which holds that seeing others safely do a behaviour makes one less anxious about the possible outcomes. The social acceptability expressed in the peer communication also indicates the normative modelling aspect of the theory indicating that perceptions of right behaviour are acquired and maintained within the group.

Conclusion

This study identified that substance use is a socially constructed activity that is a result of peer group interactions. The usage patterns mostly involve alcohol, cigarettes and locally distilled spirits which are mostly used in social events, after work and on market days. Peer communication proved to be one of the important variables in the initiation into substance use, and the informal encouragement, the observation of peer

behaviours, and storytelling facilitated early participation. Moreover, the rate of substance use was maintained with the help of systematic peer practises, repetitive invitations, and implicit peer pressure.

Lastly, peer group discussions had a considerable influence on the perception of risk and social acceptability, decreasing the perceived harm and strengthening the belief that substance use is a normative and socially accepted behaviour. The results are in line with the Social Learning Theory because the interviewees reported that they learned through observation, imitation and reinforcement in their peer groups.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proffered:

i. There should be awareness campaigns to educate internal migrant workers about the health risks of alcohol, cigarettes, and locally distilled spirits, while promoting safer social alternatives.
ii. Peer-led programmes should be developed to assist migrant workers in the process of not giving in to the pressure to begin using substances as it is necessary to promote positive socialisation, and model healthy behaviours.
iii. Alternatives to the frequent use of substances should be offered in the community activity, which will eradicate the use of alcohol or drug to create social bonding.
iv. Health education should be conducted to address the myths of the dangers and social acceptability of using the substances, with Hausa and Pidgin English being the languages that will reach everyone among the workers.

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Post-Election Violence In Nigeria: A Historical Analysis Of The 2011 Post-Election Violence In Kaduna State

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Abstract
This paper offers a historical analysis of the 2011 post-election violence in Kaduna State, Nigeria, situating the crisis within the broader trajectory of electoral violence in the country since independence. It interrogates the interplay between ethnicity, religion, and politics, demonstrating how these fault lines have repeatedly transformed political contests into violent confrontations. The study adopted a historical-descriptive approach, drawing on secondary sources to examine the structural, psychological, and physical dimensions of violence that followed the announcement of presidential election results in April 2011. The findings revealed that the violence in Kaduna, initially political, rapidly assumed ethnoreligious characteristics, fuelled by long-standing divisions, perceptions of marginalisation, and grievances linked to unemployment and poor governance. The immediate triggers included allegations of electoral malpractice and the controversial breach of the People's Democratic Party's zoning arrangement, which deepened regional mistrust. The violence claimed hundreds of lives, destroyed property, and reconfigured Kaduna's social geography along religious lines. The study concluded that Nigeria's recurrent post-election crises reflect deeper systemic weaknesses, including elite manipulation, institutional fragility, and impunity. It recommended inclusive governance, civic education, and electoral transparency as pathways to consolidating Nigeria's democracy and mitigating future conflicts.
Keywords: Electoral violence, Democratisation, Post-election.

Introduction

Violence has been described as a wild wind that blows no one good. Both warring parties and innocent people caught in the web of violence experience, see, feel, and even touch the destruction each time it occurs. Excessive use of force to prevail over citizens, such as the use of police, the Army, press censorship, and other coercive machinery of government, amounts to psychological violence. This argument is supported by reports on the 1999, 2003, and 2007 elections, which were characterised by both physical and psychological violence (Human Rights Watch 25). From a critical point of view, violence results from social conditions such as poverty, exclusion, intimidation, oppression, want, fear, and psychological pressures, breeding conflicts that later proceed to a violent phase where parties go beyond seeking to attain their goals peacefully and try to dominate, damage, or destroy the opposing party's ability to pursue their interests. There are three forms of violence: structural, which includes coercion by the government and incumbency factors to give an undue advantage; psychological, which includes threats against political opponents; and physical, which involves killings, kidnappings, and other acts (Gurr 45).

Political violence directed toward the electoral process is referred to as election-related violence. Its goal is to sabotage the conclusion of the political process to gain political power through violence. Election violence is sometimes defined as violent acts committed against individuals, property, or the electoral process to influence the outcome of an election (International Crisis Group 12). There are two explanations for election violence: cultural and institutional. The structural explanation contends that "society and politics are organised in a way that generates conflicts," whereas the cultural perspective assumes the existence of "a political culture that generally predisposes actors to engage in violence and intimidation during political contests" (Höglund 78). These perspectives are reinforced by ethnic rivalries and mobilisation in politics in most African countries that have been volatile during elections.

The nature of election violence includes murder, looting, destruction and damage of property, assault, death threats, bombings, forceful dispersion of political rallies, fighting among political parties, violent street protests, hooliganism, arbitrary detentions, arrests without warrant, abduction, economic repression, sabotage, and

intimidating voters to prevent voting (International Crisis Group 15). Historical evidence suggests that victims of electoral violence may not necessarily be voters or those with direct responsibilities in the electoral process, particularly when characterised by ethnic and religious clashes. However, immediate victims are usually voters, political parties, and their members (Human Rights Watch 30).

Post-Election Violence

Post-election violence is a specific form of violence in an electoral process, distinct from electoral violence. Electoral violence refers to any random or organised act that seeks to delay, disrupt, or influence an electoral process, whereas post-election violence occurs immediately after the collation and announcement of election results (Bekoe 10).

To understand post-election violence, one must consider the election cycles, which typically consist of three stages: pre-election phase, election period, and post-election phase. The pre-election phase includes the long run-up to the election, specifically the party nomination and campaign processes. At this point, intra-party and inter-party conflicts over nominations and voter access frequently take the form of election violence, often involving heated language and assaults on candidates and party members (Höglund 82). Most conditions leading to post-election violence are set in motion at this point; political statements and remarks can turn combustible and be repeated by supporters as a call to violence before, during, and after elections. The election phase entails actions related to the polls, such as election material distribution, voter registration, and voting itself, typically occurring on election day. Violence during this phase often starts at polling places and may spread, involving voter intimidation, ballot stuffing, ballot snatching, and further intimidation (International Crisis Group 18). The post-election phase includes collation, results announcements, litigation, and election dispute resolution. Problems from the pre-election and election periods frequently catalyse violence at this stage, manifesting as violent public protests and attacks on opposing candidates, party leaders, and supporters, as well as theft, murder, arson, and willful property destruction, typically committed by representatives or supporters of political parties (Bekoe 15). Nigeria has held eleven general elections and several regional, state, and local elections, but major post-election violence occurred only in 1965, 1983, and 2011 (Human Rights Watch 35).

Historical Analysis of the 2011 Post-Election Violence in Nigeria

Nigeria's political history reveals a persistent pattern of electoral violence. Virtually every general election since independence (1964, 1979, 1983, 1993, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011) has been accompanied by unrest (International Crisis Group 20). For example, the disputed 1964–65 elections sparked the "Operation Wetie" riots in Western Nigeria, where mobs doused opponents in petrol and set them ablaze, resulting in over 200 deaths (Falola 50). The 1983 elections degenerated into massive post-election violence, notably in Ondo State, amid allegations of vote-rigging (Falola 55). The 1993 election, though acclaimed, was followed by turmoil after its annulment, with security forces killing over 100 pro-democracy protesters (Human Rights Watch 8). Since Nigeria's return to civilian rule in 1999, thousands have perished in election-related clashes, with the 2007 elections seeing over 300 fatalities, including at least 70 in pre-election incidents (Human Rights Watch 40). The post-election violence of April 2011 stands out as the worst episode in Nigeria's modern history.

The 2011 violence erupted following a highly polarised presidential contest. Incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian from southern Nigeria representing the People's Democratic Party (PDP), was pitted against General Muhammadu Buhari, a northern Muslim candidate from the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) ("Nigeria: Post-Election Violence"). When Jonathan was declared winner on April 18, 2011, securing 57% of the vote compared to Buhari's 31%, widespread protests by Buhari's supporters immediately erupted across northern states ("Hundreds Dead"). The opposition alleged electoral fraud and perceived Jonathan's victory as a violation of an informal power-rotation arrangement between the north and south ("The 2011 Post-Election Violence"; "Nigeria: Post-Election Violence Killed 800").

Kaduna State, a flashpoint characterised by its volatile mix of ethnic and religious groups, experienced particularly heightened tensions. The state had previously faced significant communal violence, notably the 2000 Sharia riots resulting in over 2,000 deaths, and sectarian clashes in 2002 claiming around 250 lives ("Nigeria: Post-Election Violence"). Northern Kaduna is predominantly Hausa-Fulani Muslim, while the southern part comprises mainly indigenous Christian groups ("Leave Everything to God"). Long-standing political struggles over resource control and governance in Kaduna had deeply entrenched mistrust among these communities, setting the stage for the violence that erupted once election results were announced ("Leave Everything to God").

Initial peaceful protests in Kaduna between April 17 and 18 rapidly descended into violent riots and sectarian killings ("Nigeria: Post-Election Violence"). Political demonstrations by CPC supporters quickly transformed

into ethnoreligious attacks. Northern Muslim youths predominantly targeted individuals believed to support Jonathan, typically Christians and ethnic southerners living in northern cities such as Kaduna and Zaria ("Nigeria: Post-Election Violence"). Homes, churches, and businesses belonging to Christians and southerners were set ablaze, and numerous victims identified as "non-natives" were lynched ("Nigeria: Post-Election Violence"). Even government institutions like Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) offices, police stations, and PDP buildings were vandalised or destroyed ("Nigeria: Post-Election Violence"). Security forces struggled to respond effectively as the violence spread rapidly across at least twelve northern states ("Nigeria: Post-Election Violence").

In Kaduna, the violence took on a particularly severe and bipolar form due to the state's demographic division. Muslim mobs attacked Christians in northern Kaduna cities, prompting retaliatory violence by Christian youths against Muslim minorities in southern Kaduna towns ("Nigeria: Post-Election Violence"). From April 18–19, horrific massacres of Muslims occurred in towns such as Zonkwa, Kafanchan, and Matsirga ("Nigeria: Post-Election Violence"). Witness accounts detailed young men armed with machetes, clubs, and guns systematically hunting and killing men and boys of the opposing faith ("Nigeria: Post-Election Violence"). At a polytechnic in Zaria, rioters chanting pro-CPC slogans brutally killed four Christian students and one lecturer ("Nigeria: Post-Election Violence"). In Matsirga, Christian Bajju youths reportedly set fire to Muslim homes, murdering those who attempted to escape, in direct retaliation for the previous day's attacks on churches in northern Kaduna ("Nigeria: Post-Election Violence"). The reciprocal nature of violence was particularly pronounced, with Christians targeted in northern regions and Muslims facing retaliatory violence in southern Kaduna.

Remote Causes of the 2011 Post-Election Violence in Kaduna

The 2011 post-election violence in Kaduna began as political protests but turned religious and ethnic (International Crisis Group 7). First, politics in Kaduna has long been intertwined with religion, as seen in the 2002 Miss World riots, which became a religious conflict (Falola 65). Second, ethnic and religious differences have historically fueled chaos in the state (Höglund 60). Third, Kaduna's history of violence, such as the 1981 conflict over Balarabe Musa's impeachment (Falola 70). Fourth, tensions rose when Patrick Yakowa, from the southern Kaduna minority, became governor without an election, and Nnamdi Sambo was appointed Vice President, alienating the Hausa majority who supported Buhari (International Crisis Group 85). Fifth, Nigeria's lack of national cohesion, as Nigeria, compounded by high unemployment, facilitated rapid escalation, with unemployed youths readily joining violent protests (Johnson 130). Finally, bad leadership and corruption have left Nigerians frustrated, encouraging violent outbursts against perceived elite indifference (Ojo 25). These factors, rooted in ethnoreligious divisions and socio-economic grievances, set the stage for the 2011 violence.

Immediate Causes of the 2011 Post-Election Violence in Kaduna

The PDP zoning dispute was a key trigger. Some argued the presidency should remain in northern Nigeria to complete the North's eight-year term after Umaru Yar'Adua's death, while others claimed zoning ended in 2003 or that Goodluck Jonathan's candidacy continued Yar'Adua's term (International Crisis Group 10). Allegations of electoral fraud, including vote-buying, ballot stuffing, and inflated results in Jonathan's southeast stronghold, fueled perceptions of unfairness (Human Rights Watch 5). Security lapses, with minimal forces in volatile areas, allowed youths to exploit the chaos (International Crisis Group 12). On April 29, 2011, northern Kaduna youths protested election results, leading to violent clashes (Human Rights Watch 22).

Historical and Structural Causes

The 2011 Kaduna violence did not occur in isolation; it was the culmination of longstanding historical grievances and multiple triggering factors. Scholars highlight a combination of ethno-religious, political, and socio-economic elements that created the conditions for the explosive violence. Nigeria's north-south, Muslim-Christian divide became particularly apparent in Kaduna, where decades of mutual distrust between the predominantly Hausa-Fulani Muslim north and the mainly Christian ethnic groups in the south fostered zero-sum perceptions of election outcomes ("Nigeria: Post-Election Violence Killed 800"). Each group feared political and social domination by the other. According to Angerbrandt, Kaduna's communal conflicts historically centred on struggles over political and state control, essentially contests for belonging and power (148). The 2011 presidential election, resulting in a southern Christian candidate defeating a northern Muslim, mirrored national divisions at the local level, exacerbating existing tensions and igniting violence. Institutionalised policies like the indigene-settler distinctions further deepened these divides, relegating non-natives to second-class citizen status and fostering resentment ("Leave Everything to God").

Political triggers, particularly the perceived betrayal of the People's Democratic Party's (PDP) zoning agreement, significantly contributed to the violence. Since 1999, the PDP has informally alternated presidential power between northern and southern Nigeria to mitigate ethnic tensions. President Goodluck Jonathan's 2011 candidacy, following the death of northern President Umaru Yar'Adua, was seen by many northerners as violating this unwritten pact, intensifying feelings of political disenfranchisement and betrayal ("The 2011 Post-Election Violence"). Local politicians and religious leaders exploited these sentiments, framing the election as a regional struggle and magnifying tensions through inflammatory rhetoric. Opposition messages urging supporters to "guard their votes" were misinterpreted as justifications for violent resistance against perceived electoral fraud ("Nigeria Election Violence"). Buhari's defeat, amid allegations of rigging, sparked spontaneous riots driven by genuine popular outrage, although subsequent investigations revealed coordinated involvement by local thugs and political factions ("Hundreds Dead").

Socio-economic issues also played a critical role in fueling the violence. Northern Nigeria, characterised by high rates of youth unemployment and illiteracy, provided fertile ground for the mobilisation of disaffected youths (Adebajo). In Kaduna's urban slums and rural communities, widespread frustration with poor governance and lack of opportunities found expression in violent protests, targeting symbols of wealth, political authority, and state institutions (Campbell). The Presidential Commission, known as the Lemu Committee, specifically highlighted widespread public despair over persistent poverty and corruption as key factors behind the violence (Campbell).

Moreover, the "winner-takes-all" nature of Nigerian politics significantly raised the stakes of the 2011 elections. Given the state's extensive control over resources such as oil revenues and public contracts, elections were perceived as battles for economic survival and communal access to state patronage (Kwarkye). Jonathan's victory sparked fears among northern groups about exclusion from critical resources, exacerbating local tensions already heightened by the presence of a Christian governor in Kaduna, Patrick Yakowa. The perceived politicisation of resource distribution thus intensified communal competition, increasing the likelihood of violence (Kwarkye).

Lastly, Nigeria's entrenched culture of impunity significantly enabled the violence. Despite numerous commissions investigating electoral violence in previous years, recommendations were rarely implemented, leading perpetrators to anticipate minimal consequences (Campbell; "Nigeria Election Violence"). Human Rights Watch noted that authorities' failure to address root causes or hold perpetrators accountable facilitated cycles of retaliatory violence ("Nigeria: Post-Election Violence Killed 800"). The Lemu Committee explicitly criticised successive governments for their inaction, asserting this had created a pervasive sense of impunity ("Nigeria Election Violence"). Additionally, security forces were poorly prepared, and reports emerged of extrajudicial killings by soldiers deployed to suppress the riots, further exacerbating public distrust ("Hundreds Dead"). Thus, the combination of historical grievances, political triggers, socio-economic deprivation, resource competition, and institutional failures collectively created a permissive environment for the tragic events of 2011.

Nature and Impact of the Violence

The 2011 post-election violence in Kaduna was marked by rapid escalation, brutality, and a distinct two-pronged sectarian pattern. The violence erupted swiftly and at an unprecedented scale within hours of the election results, defying the expectations of observers who had initially praised the election's relative credibility ("Hundreds Dead"). Between April 17–19, entire communities descended into chaos. Mobs often mobilised along existing social networks—such as youths from the same neighbourhoods or ethnic unions—indicating local coordination or collective action facilitated by community bonds (Angerbrandt 148-49). The conflict dynamics revealed a mirror effect: the initial ethnic-religious cleansing of Christian minorities in northern towns triggered similarly violent reprisals against Muslim minorities in southern enclaves ("Hundreds Dead"; "Nigeria Election Violence").

Kaduna experienced what one local leader described as an "unbelievable" scale of killing and "colossal" destruction, polarising entire villages and urban districts along religious lines ("Hundreds Dead"). By the time the military restored a fragile peace, human and material losses were profound. Besides fatalities and displacement, Kaduna's social fabric had been severely damaged, forcing previously integrated neighbours into segregated communities driven by fear and mistrust. Many survivors, irrespective of religion, endured lasting trauma after witnessing or losing loved ones to atrocities. The violence also severely impacted national youth service volunteers (NYSC), with at least ten youth corps members killed, sparking nationwide outrage ("10 NYSC Members").

In the immediate aftermath, there was widespread condemnation and calls for peace. Both President Goodluck Jonathan and opposition candidate Muhammadu Buhari publicly denounced the violence. Buhari, under scrutiny due to his supporters' involvement, urged them to halt the attacks, particularly condemning the burning of churches, stating it was "worse than rigging the elections" ("Hundreds Dead"). Nevertheless, the damage was irreparable. The events highlighted Nigeria's fragile national unity beneath the veneer of democratic processes. Kaduna, often described as a microcosm of Nigeria due to its balanced Muslim-Christian demographic, had effectively split in two during these days of violence. This period led to severely diminished trust between communities, with recurring cycles of reprisal violence in subsequent years directly linked to the 2011 incidents.
For Nigerian democracy, the implications were equally grave. The violence demonstrated how underlying grievances could escalate into severe conflict, even following relatively well-administered elections by 2011 standards. Voter turnout and participation in some areas drastically reduced due to fear. In Kaduna, many citizens were unable to participate in the gubernatorial elections held on April 28, as they were displaced or too afraid to return home ("Nigeria: Post-Election Violence"). Thus, the violence significantly undermined the electoral process itself, effectively disenfranchising many voters. Furthermore, the recurring spectre of post-election violence threatened to erode public trust in democracy. The memory of the 2011 violence haunted the nation during subsequent elections, particularly in 2015, fueling widespread fears of repeat occurrences ("Hundreds Dead").
The 2011 violence transformed into an ethnoreligious conflict, with ethnic and religious dimensions (International Crisis Group 30). Economically, businesses closed, roadside traders lost goods, and companies relocated due to insecurity (Ojo 120). Agricultural output declined as fear disrupted markets and labor (Ojo 122). Socio-politically, the violence bred disunity and mistrust, with southerners (mostly Christians) avoiding northern Muslim areas and vice versa, undermining social cohesion (Adamu 40). The focus of politicians shifted to violence rather than governance, thereby stunting development (Adamu 42). Ethnically and religiously, the violence deepened divides, with residential patterns in Kaduna now segregated along religious lines, fostering distrust and impeding integration (Johnson 135).
The 2011 post-election violence in Kaduna State underscores the fragile fault lines within Nigeria's polity. Historically, Nigerian elections have often descended into violence, rather than celebrating democratic transitions, and the Kaduna crisis was a severe example with extensive implications. This analysis places the event within the broader continuum of electoral violence in Nigeria, highlighting entrenched ethnic and religious animosities, regional power struggles, socio-economic marginalisation, and institutional weaknesses as contributing factors to the violence (Campbell). These longstanding grievances, intensified by a violated political rotation norm and widespread dissatisfaction due to poor governance, culminated in devastating communal violence.
The impact of the 2011 violence on national unity has been profound. Nigeria was compelled to confront the fragile Christian-Muslim relations and the urgent need for reconciliation. If unresolved grievances are allowed to persist, they can ignite widespread conflict, further polarising communities and entrenching a divisive "us versus them" mentality. Indeed, some southern Kaduna leaders characterised the events as "ethno-religious cleansing" or even genocide ("Nigeria Election Violence"). This highlights the critical necessity for deliberate efforts toward fostering unity through justice, dialogue, and inclusivity.
The democratic process in Nigeria also suffered significantly from the violence. Acceptance of election results and peaceful transitions are essential democratic pillars, undermined by the 2011 violence despite the election's relative credibility. This revealed that elections alone are insufficient without broader conflict management and trust in democratic institutions. Security institutions demonstrated weaknesses in their response, and in some instances, exacerbated tensions through abuses ("Hundreds Dead"). The 2011 crisis, however, prompted corrective actions. Notably, ahead of the 2015 elections, peace campaigns intensified, resulting in peace accords among candidates and significantly fewer incidents of violence (Kwarkye). This illustrated the critical role leadership and proactive peacebuilding play in preventing electoral violence.

Conclusion

Electoral violence, like a raging inferno, threatens Nigeria's democracy and ethnic relations, as seen in Kaduna's 2011 crisis (Kaduna). This paper traces its colonial roots, where British "divide and rule" sowed ethnic divisions, worsened by military rule and electoral malpractices. The 2011 election highlighted regional splits, challenging national unity. Building nationalistic consciousness is crucial, alongside improving economic welfare, to reduce frustration fueling violence. Electoral malpractices, including vote-buying, must be curbed through transparent processes. Continuous civic education by INEC, political parties, and civil society can empower voters to reject violence. Security agencies need rapid-response strategies, and INEC must enforce

electoral laws to ensure compliance. National unity and mutual coexistence are essential for Kaduna and Nigeria's development.

Recommendations

To prevent a recurrence of the 2011 post-election violence in Kaduna, the government must implement comprehensive strategies to prevent future conflicts and strengthen its democracy. Genuine efforts are needed to address underlying ethnic and religious tensions by revising discriminatory policies, such as indigene-settler distinctions, to promote equitable governance and inclusive citizenship (Human Rights Watch). Strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law is critical, which involves enhancing the credibility of electoral bodies like the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and prosecuting perpetrators to end impunity, potentially through specialised electoral offence commissions (Campbell; International Crisis Group). Security sector reforms are essential to improve the capacity and neutrality of security forces through professional training, ensuring they uphold human rights during electoral processes (Adebajo 45). Addressing socio-economic grievances by creating job opportunities and fostering meaningful youth participation is vital to reducing the frustration that fuels violence (Human Rights Watch). Additionally, promoting inter-community dialogue, peace initiatives, and inclusive education is crucial for healing divisions, with institutionalised peace accords, as implemented post-2011, reinforcing peaceful political norms (Kwarkye 12).

The 2011 Kaduna violence underscores the urgent need to strengthen Nigeria's democracy beyond election-day procedures, emphasising governance, justice, and inclusion. The peaceful transition in 2015 demonstrates Nigeria's potential for progress when proactive measures are taken, highlighting that addressing historical grievances and reinforcing democratic institutions can transform elections into instruments of national progress rather than triggers of conflict.

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African Humanism: The Paradigm for Indigenous Environmental Ethics and Practice

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Abstract
There exists currently a global environmental crisis. Approaches to addressing these environmental challenges by ethicist and philosophers have largely relied on an anthropocentric conception and interventions in understanding these emerging issues. However, these responses have been inadequate in surmounting African and global environmental crise. Hence, there is need to broaden the search for a more localized and indigenous responses, which forms the crux of this research. Such indigenous responses must not only resonate with the immediate social context but also possess global elevance. The study offers African humanistic ontology as a paradigm for sustainable environmental ethics. Using the method of criticism, it evaluates Western anthropocentrism, which seeks to establish the lordship of man over nature, thereby dominating, and conquering the natural environment, perhaps to his own peril; the method of conceptual analysis is used in elucidating relevant terms and concepts. This study argues that the explanatory factors of Africa's environmental challenges could be seen in the abandonment of her ontological worldview (of life forces harmoniously coexisting with one another) in preference for Western ideologies, which seek to subdue nature. It therefore maintains that a return to the original indigenous African humanism, which establishes a web of connection between man and nature, is necessary for solving her ecological problems.
Key words: African Humanism, environment, ontology, sustainability, indigenous knowledge.

Introduction

There exists a web of relations, an interdependence between man and his natural environment. However, in most cases, man has dominated and continue to exert efforts aimed at dominating, manipulating and conquering his environment for his ends. This may be inspired by a kind of anthropocentrism and humanism which not only place man at the center of the universe but also urge him to explore, exploit, manipulate and conquer nature for his own needs. Ultimately, we become faced with a materialist sort of civilization and humanism which disturbs the equilibrium of the ecosystem for the so-called benefits of man.

Within the African continent, we are confronted with different challenges. As Ojomo (2010) rightly observed, Africa has a rich heritage as well as multifaceted challenges in her cultural-political experience. Since primordial times, Africans have had a humane and peaceful society and environment informed by sound ethics. However, due to some internal dynamics in various African cultures coupled with some external forces, African states are now experiencing acute developmental challenges, which have impacted negatively on their environment. Besides political issues arising from leadership ineptitude and capitalist aggrandizement, which have brought about corruption, injustice, poverty and underdevelopment of the continent, there is now a new dimension to the African crisis - the environmental crisis.

It is, of course, a disturbing reality that environmental crisis is now one of the most pressing concerns of our planet. As Ogungbemi (1997) avers, environmental crisis is one of the greatest global challenges of our time. As a global phenomenon, no society is totally immuned from the threats which the environmental crisis poses to humanity and the rest of the ecosystem. Nevertheless, with respect to the African experience, a vast area of land rich in natural resources of all kinds, the dimension of the global environmental crisis in the continent takes on a peculiar character. The causes of environmental pollution and degradation, environmental injustice, ineffective responses to the environmental crisis, and the lack of a viable environmental ethics, which take cognizance of the peculiar dynamics of the environmental crisis in Africa, are issues worthy of philosophical scrutiny. This informs the rationale for this research.

The paper aims to advance blueprints or paradigm for addressing the problem of environmental crises facing Africa and the world at large. It suggests that Africans should not go abroad in search of solutions to her ecological issues. The solution lies within her and it is to be discovered in her indigenous ontological worldview called African humanism. This is a kind of humanism embedded in African ontology which does not call for domination and subduing of nature but a kind which calls for harmonious co-existence and cooperation with nature (Azenabor, 2004).

Humanism and African Humanism

The concept of humanism is not peculiar to the African. Humanistic ideologies and philosophies pervade history. However, the understanding of the concept has varied from culture to culture. In its simplest form,

humanism is the philosophy that places man, the human being, as the centre of focus. This homo-centricism (man-centredness) has influenced philosophic thought throughout history.

Humanism was first articulated as a revolt and protest against the idea of personal immortality of Christianity, it is a call to man to make the best of life in this world and delight in earthly achievements and build a better life here on earth. It maintains a morality or ethics that grounds all human values in this earthly existence and experience (Azenabor, 2004). Starting from the 14th century when Renaissance humanism was birthed to this period, there have arisen different versions of humanism: religious, secular, philosophical, literary, etc. (Slavica, 2020), each drawing inspiration from whatever motive that formed it, though they share one thing in common: the well-being of man. We, therefore, define humanism as a philosophy, a thought system, an ideology or a perspective, which focuses on man and projects the individual human being at the center of discourse, policy and action. It is a philosophy that takes man to be of the most supreme value.

Having defined humanism, why should we still talk about African Humanism? Are there elements in African version of human beings that make its humanism different? While we acknowledge that human beings are the same everywhere, their experiences and cultural wellsprings differ. How different is the African ontological and cultural outlooks that we can justifiably talk about African humanism?

African Humanism, as an African thought system, stresses on defining relationship among people in society, that is, inter-dependence, rather than bold description of individual events in human experience or individualism (Azenabor, 2004). African humanism, therefore, is a version of humanism which emphasizes personality, dignity and worth of the African man. It takes cognizance of his culture and traditions, rather than on science and technology per se.

The foundation of African humanism could be said to be established on African metaphysics or ontology of life forces. Accordingly, African humanism is built on the foundation of African conscious and unconscious experiences from which her metaphysics arises. By metaphysics, we generally mean the systematic study of the whole of reality in both its material and immaterial dimensions (Walsh, 1963). Thus, African humanism is a call for Africans to embrace whatever is human in their culture and promote them to enhance human existence and sustainability.

The notable African scholar, Sophie Bosede Oluwole, a Nigerian professor and philosopher, posited humanism as the foundation of African philosophy (Adebumiti, 2016). S.B. Oluwole, a traditionalist, insists that African philosophy is anchored on human existence: such that when the African makes sacrifices, insists for the observance of morality, does good towards his neighbour, etc. he does so ultimately to promote humanity, and not to do the will of any gods or goddesses. In other words, African philosophy is ultimately "human-centered" and "anthropocentric"[11]. In her words: "Indeed, Humanism is "the apex of human thought, the inevitable end of rational endeavours to understand man and nature as they relate to each other" (Oluwole, 1989). Thus, African humanism is such that promotes human welfare and human existence. It denotes a philosophy that drives growth, complementarity, respect, dignity, and overall joy to man and his community, through his cultural and traditional practices. She insists that any thought system that has reached its zenith must have human interest at the center (Oluwole, 1989).

Wiredu (1992) makes a case for African humanism as the foundation of African morality. Wiredu strongly dismisses supernaturalism as incapable of being the foundation of African moral system. Wiredu holds the view that the best way to understand morality in the African tradition is in terms of some physical property (Molefe, 2016). He denies that morality can be grounded on any spiritual foundation and therefore argues that “the will of God, not to talk of that of any other extra-human being, is logically incapable of defining the good (Molefe, 2016). For Wiredu, humanism is the foundation upon which African moral system is erected. This is because the will of God is not sufficient to establish the morality of human action neither is the will of any extra-human entity capable of doing so (Wiredu, 1992).

Wiredu opines that even when Africans forbid certain actions and declare them taboos, these are not taboos because they offend the will of God, but because they do not promote human well fare; they stand against the well-being of man, hence, the African society prohibits them. Wiredu insists that these taboos can be explained purely in rational terms (Wiredu, 1996). He refers to his naturalistic ethics in terms of ‘humanism’. In other words, the physical property that grounds or informs morality is some aspects of human nature. He makes this humanistic position of his clear by appeal to his native (Akan) language – ‘*Onipa na ohia’*. He translates this sentence to mean “that it is a human being that has value” and observes that the original language is more illuminating than English:

[11] Anthropocentric here implies directing its attention towards the well-being of man; placing man at the center.

> The word "(o)hia" in this context means both that which is of value and that which is needed. Through the first meaning the message is implied that all value derives from human interests and through the second that human fellowship is the most important of human needs (Wiredu, 1992).

For Wiredu, the foundation of African ethics, and, by extension, philosophy, is human. This humanism expresses the ultimate value of the human person who alone determines and assigns value to every other entity in the universe.

Western and African Perspectives on Humanism

As we noted earlier, Western humanism subtly differs from the African version. Although both champion the interest of the human person, however, whereas the former emphasizes the individuality of each human person and his rights that must be protected by all means legal, the latter lays premium on the communitarian nature of the individual person who owes a duty to his neighbour's interests. Again, while Western humanism originated as a revolt against organized religion, which de-emphasized the individual's rights and personality in the scheme of things; African humanism rather originates from African ontological outlook. In other words, the foundation of African humanism could be said to be established on African metaphysics or ontology of life forces. It is a humanism deeply rooted in cultural and traditional practices which bond and bind one with another.

African humanism differs from that of the West because in the following ways:

i. whereas Western humanism emphasizes rights of each individual, African humanism rather emphasizes duties to one another;

ii. whereas Western humanism is individualistic in undertone, African humanism emphasizes community of membership;

iii. whereas Western humanism favours atomistic analysis of terms, its Africa counterpart lays stress on interpretation and synthesis of the whole of reality (Azenabor, 2004). Thus, African humanism is a call for Africans to embrace whatever is human in their culture and promote them to enhance human existence and sustainability.

To sum up, African humanism promotes universal brotherhood and cares for the entire human race. The ideals of humanism does not give room for discrimination, cronyism, nepotism, tribalism and, of course, corruption which has eaten away the very fabric of Africa's corporate existence. People in the corridors of power and top civil servants allot jobs and contracts based on ethnicity, kinship lines and the likes. This has promoted and continue to promote mediocrity, inefficiency and underdevelopment. This is exactly the problems that humanism has come to address. Humanism of African origin, calls for brotherhood of people and extension of care to all humans irrespective of ethnicity, kinship and friendship lines.

Secondly, African humanism justifies morality and roots it in human existence. It is a common fact of experience that one easily does something that benefits them. If man were asked to be moral so as to appease the gods or as a way of obeying divine commands, he would find it difficult to do. It would even be impossible for morality to be observed if it were directed to the well-being of the gods, entities we do not see. However, as humanists rightly observed, moral values and their respect, are there to better the lives of human beings. African humanism inspires confidence in our humanity. It reminds us that vices like murder, incest, pedophilia, bribery and corruption, robbery, adultery, etc. diminish our humanity and affect our lives directly. That is why we must eschew them and do good to promote our common existence.

Finally, African humanism embraces African culture and tradition, community service and interpersonal relationships, values and mores, interpretation of human experiences and not the analysis and subjugation of nature. African humanism calls on African scholars to embrace humanity and interpret each human experience in the light of African values and traditions. This must be done in indigenous language and education that respects peculiar African experiences.

African Humanism and Indigenous Environmental Practices.

African societies have always had practices, which promote environmental sustainability across the continent. The African ecosystem is a peculiar one. This is evident in the manner many African societies hallow their natural environment, especially the land (Gichure, 2008). The traditional African societies did not play with their land, not just because it was necessary for farm use but because it was the chief sustainer of life (Gichure, 2008). Thus, worthy of reverence and preservation.

A keen observation of the cultural practices and attitudes of many African societies towards their environment suggest a metaphysical and spiritual dimension to ecological conservation. Drawing from her holistic ontology of the community of beings, many African societies developed and practiced in many ways, activities that promote environmental sustainability. Some of those practices include; In Igboland, certain communities

prohibit people from using buckets to fetch water in certain rivers. The law stipulated that one could only go there barefooted and with calabash to fetch drinkable water. Upon further investigation, it was discovered that certain kinds of rare animal species and fish lived in that aquatic habitat. Furthermore, the springs were their major source of drinkable water, so these rules ensured the protection of the natural environment, animals and human life. One hears the sayings in Igboland "*ndu mmiri, ndu azu*" (let the waters remain so that the fish can live), "*mmiri atala, azu anwuna*" (may the waters never dry so the fish can live). These confirm, albeit without systematization, the tenets of environmental ethics.

African agricultural practices were sensitive of the integrity of the ecosystem. In the ancient African society, hunters were discouraged from hunting in certain forests designated as evil forests, which harboured plants and animals of spiritual significance. A few societies, such as the Kung in the Kalahari Desert and the Mbuti in the rain forest of Congo (Kinshasha), survived almost completely unchanged into modern times. According to Garvey (2023), women were the primary economic producers in many early societies. Between 60 and 80 percent of the calories consumed by people in the existing hunting-and-gathering societies came from the fruits, roots, grains, nuts, honey, and other foods gathered by women. This pattern did not change after agriculture took hold across most of Africa. Women today perform between 60 and 80 percent of the continent's agricultural labor. Throughout most of rural Africa, their roles in farming differ from men's, a fact that is illustrated by the way particular tools are associated with gender. The axe is considered a man's tool because men clear and prepare the land. They also plow the fields. The hoe (usually small) is reserved for women, who plant, harvest, process, and store the crops (Garvey, 2023).

The Yoruba people of South Western Nigeria had Sacred Groves. These groves were considered sacred as they were situated in areas the people believed spirits resided. These areas were accorded great respect and care. Rituals, ceremonies, and prayers were offered to these spirits seeking their blessings and protection. The groves were also used for community gatherings and important events. As Ajuwon (2004) notes, these groves hold deep spiritual significance for the Yoruba people and are considered sacred spaces that must be respected and preserved. They are a vital part of Yoruba culture, showcasing strong connection between the people and the spiritual world. These groves are protected from human activities such as farming and logging, and are seen as a way of maintaining the balance of nature.

The Maasai tribe, found in Kenya and Tanzania, promote wildlife conservation and has developed traditional practices such as setting land aside for wildlife conservation and using sustainable hunting methods (Kipuri, 1983). The Dogon people of Mali developed a complex cosmology that emphasizes the interconnectedness of things (Griaule, 1965). This is exemplified in their sustainable agriculture and forestry practices. The Zulu people of Kenya demonstrate the same level of awareness and spirituality of the natural environment and land use. For them, land is a sacred trust from their ancestors and have developed cultural practices to conserve the fertility of the land (Ngubane, 1977).

To preserve the totality of nature and increase yields, lands were held in high esteem. In Igboland, *Ala* deity is associated with land; and as the Earth Mother, she is symbolized with a sculpted woman with a child or children on her. *Amadioha* in Umunneoha or *Kamalu* in Ngwa area is associated with thunder. River goddesses are associated with particular rivers or streams that are also known by the same name as the goddesses. For example, *Iyi-oku* in Awhum or *Imoka* in Awka are names of goddesses that are associated with certain rivers. Forest goddesses are associated with particular sacred forests like *Offia awoke* and *Nte ophina* in Ikwo of Ebonyi state. The shrines for the river goddesses are located beside the streams or they may have a pot or bowl of water in the vicinity of the shrines. Deities associated with hills are often located near particular hills, as in the case of the defunct *Ugwu-ezeama* deity in Imezi Owa and *Uto* deity of Ugwu-uto in Nsude (Osuafor, 2007). All of these spirits and deities were consulted before farming started, and also to avoid misusing those places certain harmful actions were declared taboos.

Spirits and gods are also associated with trees and animals, and often take their names and significance from the names and significances of those natural elements. In other words, the importance of a particular natural object would highlight the importance the people attach to the deity associated with it. The scarcity of water in the semi-arid zone of Ojebe-Ogene can explain the importance of *Iyi-oku* both as a stream and a goddess of Awhum. Similarly, according to Ezechi, the importance of land to the farmers may also explain the important place of rituals associated with lands (Ezechi, 2018).

According to Kelleher (1999), rituals associated with the preservation of the earth (land) recall the social nature of ritual in general, that it is a function of the dynamics of the social process, "the interplay between two different needs, the need for structure or social order and the need to experience the more basic human bonding that is prior to any order" (Kelleher, 1999). Therefore, it may be rewarding for proper understanding of ritual to recognize that it is a multi-disciplinary concept. Rituals were developed not just to appease the deities associated

with certain areas but also to preserve the general ecosystem and promote eco-friendliness in all economic activities.

African humanism, as we have explained above, is grounded in a holistic ontology which acknowledges and respects the coexistence of both man and nature. To enhance the safety of both the spiritual and physical ecosystem sometimes rituals and taboos were formulated. For example, in the event of soil degradation, people may decide to enhance yam production by reducing the number of crops planted in the same farm with yam. However, in the end, this caution may evolve into a sacred observance and custom in which case it is now regarded as offensive to the gods to plant particular crop in a yam farm. It is done for the survival of the people in the face of ecological challenges. Most of Igbo traditional rituals could be explained in this way - land observances, agricultural rituals, sex taboos, and even masquerade rituals. The Igbo metaphysics of the environment demands that one sees reality as one (*Uwa bu Ogbu*), while underscoring the interconnectedness of man and nature while promoting an ecology of care. Here, reality is understood as a community (Kezie, 2023).

The overall efficiency of these indigenous African humanistic perspectives have further influenced contemporary environmental practices. For example, indigenous communities in Africa have developed ecotourism initiatives, showcasing their traditional knowledge and cultural practices while promoting conservation (Butler & Hinch, 2007). This approach has influenced modern ecotourism practices, emphasizing community-led tourism and cultural exchange (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018). Indigenous communities in the Amazon have long practiced agroforestry, integrating trees into agricultural landscapes to maintain biodiversity and soil health (Posey, 2004). This approach has influenced modern sustainable agriculture practices, recognizing the importance of tree cover in agricultural ecosystems (Scherr, et al., 2017). Its influence can also be seen in sustainable water management. Indigenous communities in Australia have developed traditional practices for sustainable water management, such as using wetlands to filter and store water (Jackson, 2006). This approach has influenced modern water management practices, emphasizing the importance of natural infrastructure in maintaining water quality (Brierley, et al., 2019). Indigenous communities in the Arctic have developed traditional knowledge-based approaches to climate change mitigation, such as using sea ice as a natural carbon sink (Crate & Nuttall, 2017). This approach has influenced modern climate change mitigation strategies, recognizing the importance of indigenous knowledge in addressing global environmental challenges (IPCC, 2019).

In recent times, different countries of the world, in a bid to address their multifaceted environmental challenges, have integrated indigenous practices into policy making. For instance, Bolivia's education policy has incorporated indigenous practices and perspectives, recognizing the importance of intercultural education (Gustafson, 2017). This approach has been enshrined in policy through the Bolivian Education Law (2010). The government of Canada has incorporated indigenous knowledge into environmental impact assessments, recognizing the importance of traditional ecological knowledge in decision-making (Berkes, 2018). This approach has been enshrined in policy through the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (2012). In Australia, indigenous traditional owners are leading conservation efforts through joint management arrangements with government agencies (Smyth & Sutherland, 2017). This approach has been formalized through policy initiatives such as the Indigenous Protected Areas Program. New Zealand's health policy has incorporated indigenous practices and perspectives, recognizing the importance of cultural competency in healthcare delivery (Durie, 2017). This approach has been enshrined in policy through the New Zealand Health Strategy (2016).

Critical Evaluation of African humanism as a Paradigm for Indigenous Environmental Ethics and Sustainability

The quest to devise an indigenous African ethics to combat environmental challenges is an on-going one. As an alternate environmental ethics, African environmental ethics is an ethics adapted to suit the unique cultural experiences of the African man. Environmental ethics itself is a sub-field of ethics, which is concerned with the ethical relation between humans and the natural environment (Brennan & Norva, 2023). Environmental ethics seeks to extend ethics beyond its traditional inter-human moral relationship to include non-human features of nature in our moral consideration (Brennan & Norva, 2023). Environmental values are a set of beliefs about what is good and evil, right and wrong, just and unjust, beautiful or ugly about, or in relation to the environment.

Environmental ethics attempts to inquire into the moral status of nature. In doing so, it applies the concepts, principles, and theories in traditional moral and political philosophy to address environmental questions. We talk about environmental ethics in Africa today because we recognize more than ever before that human beings are not lords over nature but custodians of nature. Africans have always noted this in much of their traditional and

cultural practices concerning the land and safety of forests, but thoughts on eco-friendliness were never systematized.

Although ethics, especially in the Western philosophical tradition, was traditionally concerned with relations between human beings (rational beings), in the last half a century, or so, Western philosophical scholarship has increasingly come to the realization that humans are neither morally superior nor special creatures (Tosam, 2019). Human beings are only one among several species that make up one big family called nature, and for that reason, moral responsibility is not only owed to humans, but ought to be extended to the rest of nature (Tosam, 2019). Environmental philosophy was born out of the recognition that our neighbor is not only a fellow human, but also nature as a whole. Hence, an eco-philosophical rendition of the biblical saying: "Love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Matthew 22:34-40), will imply extending love and compassion beyond human beings to include nature in our moral consciousness (Tosam, 2019).

African traditional environmental ethics emphasizes that human beings are mere co-occupants of nature with other species without any heavenly mandate to dominate, subdue, and exploit nature. This attitude toward nature is diametrically opposed to the mechanistic and anthropocentric outlook initiated by Francis Bacon and Rene Descartes, which perceives humans as privileged members of the ecologic community with the moral authority to subdue, control, and monopolizes the rest of nature (Tosam, 2019). Traditional morality recognized the sacrosanctity and sacredness of the land and made prohibitions in the form of taboos that geared towards protecting the land (Osuafor, 2007). The fundamental goal of environmental ethics in Africa, as in the Western world, is sustainability.

Sustainability is the fundamental goal towards which environment ethics tend. Like environmental ethics, it stresses the conviction that the natural environment must be preserved for posterity. Sustainability in African environmental ethics calls for the preservation of the environment for future generations, respect for indigenous environmental values, and the recognition that human beings are not the only creatures in nature that morally matter. Such hopes for sustainability would be impracticable without leveraging on indigenous environmental knowledge.

For millennia, indigenous knowledge practices have been fundamental to sustaining indigenous livelihoods. Indigenous knowledge is performative and pragmatic (Muller, 2012). Indigenous cultures (practices communicated via ceremonies, stories, songs) contain an intrinsic nature-relatedness and has a great deal to teach the world about environmental sustainability (Boiral, et al., 2020). This invariably leads to better environmental outcomes. Indigenous systems possess a link to the eco-system in which they are embedded. This is often referred to as Traditional Ecological Knowledge (Harvey, 2009). This knowledge is necessary for sustainable development.

Amidst the global shifting ecologies, indigenous knowledge plays a key role in maintaining and protecting the ancestral environment (Huaman, 2015). This means that Indigenous people have for generations created, maintained and negotiated clear and explicit relationship with their environment. As such, the development of a sustainable environmental ethics must elicit from the people's peculiar circumstances. The practices and benefits of fully engaging with the indigenous people on environmental issues, particularly in terms of local ecosystems and sensitive sites, biodiversity management, development of environmental values, supporting environmental monitoring ought to spring from a relationship of trust with the indigenous populations and reliance on their judgements (Niigaaniin & MacNeill, 2022). The Nuxalk Sputc Project (2017) demonstrates a successful application of this approach. The application of indigenous knowledge, values and priorities in research approach and community engagement proves the significant resources laden in indigenous methodologies in environmental management (Beveridge, et al., 2021).

African humanism, an indigenous perspective, offers a veritable approach on how best the environment can be sustained. Firstly, it offers a developmental model that integrates both human beings and nature into one united process. It does see development in terms of economic exploitation. African conception of development is indeed unique in that it does not see development in terms of economic growth alone. Africans do not also perceive development to involve the exploitation of man and his environment. For Chivaura (2014), development in African worldview is not lateral or movement from one place to another. It is to develop, is to be rooted and grow like a tree. It consists in being deeply rooted in culture. This rootedness in culture will manifest in respect for others, especially the elderly ones, the cultivation of virtues, mastery of one's mother tongue, being versed in traditions and proverbs, appreciation of one's natural environment, acquiring the spirit of contentment, robust relationship with all and sundry, responding actively to duty's call to serve one's fatherland either as a soldier or as a watchman. In other words, true development is said to have taken place in African perspective, when one has acquired the necessary skills that enable him to think for himself, take decisions and execute them independently of one's peers. For the African humanist, development is an integral process which

involves the whole heart, mind, body and spirit of a person realized in the equilibrium which exists between man and his environment.

Secondly, African indigenous humanistic paradigm responds to the problem of environmental sustainability because it naturally incorporates the whole of environment into the society, expressed in its taboos, prohibitions and customs. Environmental sustainability is rooted directly into African metaphysical worldview prior to the advent of colonialism. The whole of the universe is divine, with the universe being the body of God while God is the soul of the universe. There is a connection, an inter-penetrability, a cyclic and symbiotic unity of life forces within the universe (Okoro, 2017). This ontologico-moral outlook is the rationale behind the cultivation of moral sustainability, thus laying the foundation of respect for nature and, in extension, environmental sustainability.

Thirdly, African indigenous humanism promotes universal brotherhood and care for the entire human race, clime and environment. The ideals of African humanism does not give room for discrimination, exploitation of nature, cronyism, nepotism, tribalism and, of course, corruption, which has eaten away the very fabric of Africa's corporate existence. It is a sustainable theory that urges humanity to be proactive in the preservation of the natural environment, and not reactive to environment degradation.

Finally, African indigenous humanism embraces African culture and tradition, community service and interpersonal relationships, values and mores, interpretation of human experiences and not the analysis and subjugation of nature. African humanism calls on African scholars to embrace humanity and interpret each human experience in the light of African values and traditions. This must be done in indigenous language and education that respects peculiar African experiences: these experiences themselves must be deeply rooted in culture, traditions, customs and moral values.

Ogungbemi (1997) observes that the way in which natural resources, such as land, water and air, are currently being used is contrary to the traditional African practice of environmental conservation thereby creating ecological imbalances. To this end, he proposes an ethics of care that involves an orientation in which one does not take from nature more than one needs. He further developed the ethics of nature-relatedness, which succinctly states an ethics that leads human beings to seek to co-exist peacefully with nature and treat it with some reasonable concern for its worth, survival and sustainability (Ogungbemi, 1997). Geofrey Tangwa (2004) proposes “eco-bio-communitarianism” as an alternate means of solving Africa’s environmental crises. This is metaphysical worldview which involves the “recognition and acceptance of inter-dependence and peaceful coexistence between earth, plants, animals and humans”. This metaphysical outlook underpins the relations among human beings. It was also responsible for why traditional Africans were more cautious in their attitude to plants, animals and inanimate things and the various invisible forces in the world (Tangwa, 2004). He notes that traditional Africans were more disposed towards the attitude of “live and let live”. Furthermore, within the traditional African metaphysical worldview, the dichotomy between “plants, animals, and inanimate things, between the sacred and the profane, matter and spirit, the communal and the individual, is a slim and flexible one” (Tangwa, 2004).

African humanism, also known as Ubuntu, promotes sustainable living through its emphasis on interconnectedness, community, and respect for nature. African humanism emphasizes the importance of community and collective well-being (Mbiti, 1969). This approach encourages individuals to work together to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable development. African humanism lays much premium on respect for nature and the recognition of the intrinsic value of all living things (Nussbaum, 2003). This perspective encourages sustainable practices and the preservation of natural resources.

African humanism further highlights the intricate web of all things, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all living things and encouraging individuals to recognize their place within the larger web of life (Tutu, 1999). This perspective fosters a sense of responsibility towards the environment and promotes sustainable practices. It emphasizes reciprocity and the importance of giving back to the community and the environment Karenga, 2004). This approach encourages sustainable practices and the recognition of the impact of human actions on the environment.

Conclusion

African humanism, deeply rooted in its metaphysical worldview, accommodates the whole of nature in all its dimensions. It is an ontology, which does not separate the spiritual from the physical, the human from the natural. The research maintains that much of the environmental challenges confronting humanity all over the world today could have been adequately arrested, if the African environmental ethics rooted in its holistic ontology, is globally upheld. This is because an ethic that naturally recognizes and embraces the sanctity, sacredness and integrity of the cosmos automatically produces a sustainable natural environment.

The foregoing does not imply that traditional African societies never contributed to environmental degradation. Neither does one assume the position that Africa is excusable in the current global warming unsettling human existence. The fact is that African traditional societies were conscious of the life, health, integrity of the whole forces; they were aware, and rightly so, that any interruption of the cosmic order could occasion reverberations, repercussions and incalculable consequences to the immediate community and the whole of society. Hence, they did everything possible to live harmoniously with nature. This nature-awareness, this eco-friendliness, this afro-bio-communitarianism are the virtue we ask the contemporary world to look into, to pick what is noble in them and domesticate for the overall health of the ecosystem.

The role of indigenous communities in developing environmental policies and values should be given prime consideration as most indigenous people are more responsive and responsible towards the natural environment. Their future depends on it. Whatever policy must be inclusive and culturally relevant, must speak to the indigenous needs of the people to work, a path to sustainability. Policy makers must device indigenous means of tackling the challenges: there must be cooperation across boards so as to decisively deal with the crisis. Avenues for potential synergies should be explored and a thorough integration achieved. It is believed that through this approach of engagement and cooperation, we can build a more sustainable and flourishing society.

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Consequences of Political Violence on Nigeria's Political Arena and Its Implications on National Security

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Abstract
Elections are generally accepted in all climes of the world as the hallmark of democracy. Free, fair and credible elections in any democratic society are platforms for legitimate governments with the capacity to initiate and implement clearly articulated development programs, peace, and good governance in the society. The persistent challenge of political violence is majorly associated with lack of relevant data and fragile implementation of institutional and legal laws that would have adequately addressed the menace. The contemporary Nigeria has become a theatre of genocide, blooded and insecurity since the dawn of democracy due to the carnage activities of political thugs. This study examines the Impacts of Political Violence on Democracy and National Security in Nigeria. The major objective of this study is to examine the effect of political violence on the state of the nation's economy. The significance of the study is to provide relevant data for counselors and guidance in the political sector on how to conduct free and fair election devoid of crisis. Multiple method of data collection to gather rich information were adopted in bit to derive relevant information sufficient for this study. Frustration Aggression Theory by John Dollard (1939) was used for the paper. The finding on this study revealed, among others, some obvious causes of political violence in Nigeria as, fragile implementation of electoral law, government influence of electoral justice system, corruption in the judicial systems, bad attitudes of some corrupt law enforcement agencies, poor economy and youth unemployment, high level of illiteracy and ignorance, religious affiliation and ethnicity and clash of different political interests. The study therefore recommends that regular research should be conducted to assess any area or issues that will result to pre or post-election violence in Nigeria, regular research should be conducted to assess any areas or issues that will result to pre or post-election violence in Nigeria, effective empowerment of the law enforcement agencies in charge of election conduct and monitoring in Nigeria, voter education and campaigns to be encouraged.
Keywords: Political Violence and National Security

Introduction

Political violence on democracy is one of the major challenges threatening the peace and stability of democracy in Nigeria. The contemporary Nigeria has become a theatre of genocide, bloodshed and insecurity since the dawn of democracy due to the carnage activities of political thugs. The thugs of various political parties, groups, or individual politicians unleash havoc on innocent Nigerian populace who are presumed to belong to the opposing political party.

Nigeria had witnessed series of crime waves that transposed a new dispensation into the so-called modern democratic government. The military, in the first instance, solely took advantage of its professional training by using violence to upsurge power through coups and counter coups. The politicians in their turn, and in their bids to absorb power, used hired-thugs, or paid assassins/hired killers to perpetrate violence and instill fears on their opponents. The frustrated masses took to formulation of militant groups as witnessed in the uproar of the youths from South-South and the Boko Haram Sect from the North-Eastern part of the country (Ahmed, 2012).

Pre-electoral violence may occur where electoral laws or provisions seen to have favoured a particular candidate or party at the expense of others. It could also occur when a particular candidate perceived that he or she is

heading towards losing the election to his or her opponent. It may be engineered by individuals who feel cheated, alienated or deprived by the unfairness of the electoral process. Post-electoral violence on the other hand, may be spontaneous reactions as the result of the outcome of the election. It may be engineered by individuals who feel cheated, alienated or deprived by the unfairness of the electoral process.

The challenges of the nation democracy can be traced back to colonial periods characterized with violent conflicts resulting from state repression. Political violence is an endemic feature of most of the world political systems. This is particularly true of the developing countries, where political violence has become an essential characteristic of the political process, particularly after political independence (Tamuno, 1972) as cited in (Adeleke, 2013).

Nigeria's electoral politics from independence has been tumultuous. Violence has continued to mar the conduct of almost all general elections, making free and fair elections a desideratum. Thus, electoral violence has proved to be Nigeria's harbinger of national instability as unabated festering irregularities that manifest at different stages of election subject almost all Nigeria's election below the minimum democracy standard. The 1964 general elections were the first election conducted by the Nigerian elite after independence. Prior to the elections, the contested results of the national census and the intense political campaign by political parties had heightened the political stake and thus affected the outcome of the elections which was marred by unethical practices (Olayiwola, 2014).

Nigerian's electoral history has not been a pleasant one. Nigerians have participated in many elections, beginning with the colonial era when the concept of election was first introduced. The electorates have also grown from about 5,000 adults with 100 pounds sterling income per annum as qualification to be eligible to vote, to over 70 million voters of 18 years of age and above. Elective posts have also increased tremendously and electoral references have also changed from being members of the colonial service whose electoral duties were part time assignment to being members of an Independent Electoral Commission on full time employment. Yet, since its attainment of independence in 1960, Nigeria has been bedeviled by political instability fuelled, largely, by an electoral process in crisis (Osimen and Ologunowa, 2013).

Political violence is becoming more alarming than what was observed and felt in the late 1960s and 1980s. It is giving the right thinking Nigerians some form of nightmares and food for thought on ways of taming the hydra (Akpan, 2015). The 2007 Nigeria's general elections also recorded an upsurge of irregularities and maneuvering of the electoral process. Political violence is the use of destructive means or methods in an unlawful manner against persons, property, institutions, in order to publicize grievances, coerce or intimidate a government, opponents, and the civilian population, in furtherance of political socio-economic and religious objectives (Denen, 2013). For democracy to deliver politicians that improve the welfare of the masses, citizens must be informed and vote to hold politicians accountable (Marcel and Pedro, 2013). Electoral violence has caused a lot of harm to the democratic stability in Nigeria. An uncontrolled electoral violence has the potential of truncating democratic stability in a country.

Conceptual Clarifications

Political Violence

Anifowose (1982) defined Political Violence as the use of physical force or threat carried out by individual(s) within a political system against another individual(s) or group(s) and property, with the intention to cause injury, damage or death to persons and property presumed to be in opposition. Political Violence is the deliberate use of power and force to achieve political goals (World Health Organisation, 2002). As outlined by World Health Organisation, political violence is characterized by both physical and psychological acts aimed at injuring or intimidating populations.

Political Violence could take two dimensions that are pre-electoral violence and post-electoral violence (Tamuno, 1991). The pre-electoral violence may occur where electoral laws or provisions are seen to favour a particular candidate at the expense of the other. It could also occur when a particular candidate is over-ambitious and perhaps sees the signals that he may likely lose the election to the opponent. Post-electoral violence, on the other hand, may be spontaneous. It may be engineered by individuals who feel cheated, alienated or deprived by the unfairness of the electoral process. This deprivation may be real or perceived. In Nigeria, the purpose of such violence, apart from seeking redress through illegal means, is also to destroy it, if we cannot have it (Afolabi, 2007) as cited in (Ikyase and Egberi, 2015).

Causes of Political Violence in Nigeria

1. Poverty: Poverty is a principal cause of political, social and economic conflicts in Nigeria. Poverty, in the midst of plenty; creates disaffection among the populace and leads them toward violent behaviour.

It constrains the ability of the people to make independent choices and participate actively in decision making. It reduces their self-esteem and ability to extract accountability from those they elect.

2. Unemployment: This provides a fertile ground for the recruitment of the youths into an army of political thugs. As a result, these youths feed on the crumbs that fell from the tables of the politicians, who, in-turn, use them as thugs to perpetuate political and electoral violence.
3. Absence of political tolerance: Political intolerance and the tendency to see election as a do or die affair also contribute to electoral violence at the detriment of democratic stability. Hardly do election losers in Nigeria accept the verdict of the ballot box. Our politicians in Nigeria should learn lesson from the developed nations where losers of election embrace and congratulate those who defeat them in elections. Personal bitterness and existing rivalry between two contenders can eventually degenerate into serious political violence in Nigeria.
4. Partisan attitude of electoral bodies: Electoral management bodies play significant roles in ensuring the effective management of elections and ensuring credibility, fairness and success of elections. If such a body behaves in a manner that cast doubts on the otherwise fairness and credibility of an election, the ensuing reactions and discontents may result in conflict when election results are declared.
5. The nature of the electoral and party system: These are key factors that can exacerbate or moderate the occurrence of violence in the process of an election since they directly affect the character and political ideology of the party. The level to which these systems are viewed as just, equitable, inclusive, and democratic may control or mitigate the likelihood of eruption of violence.
6. Godfatherism in party politics: Some political parties are incapable of organizing themselves in line with democratic requirements for electoral conduct. This challenge introduces tension and hostilities into the electoral system practice as some political elites regarded as godfathers take over control of the parties and influence their decisions. These political godfathers influence the choice of party delegates who vote to select leaders of the parties as well as candidates at the party's primaries (Nkwede, Ibeogu & Nwankwo, 2014). By controlling the delegates, the godfathers decide who should become the party's leaders as well who gets the nomination to contest for elective positions.
7. Sit-tight syndrome: In Nigeria, Leaders enjoy the benefits of governance and therefore are most times reluctant to leave the position. Violent activities occur in situations where it is envisaged that there is the probability of replacing the incumbent leadership of a state and where such incumbent is not ready to relinquish power. This scenario could be as a result of the dominance of one party or the attitude of intolerance of opposition.

Implications of Political Violence on national security in Nigeria

There abound various impact of political violence on Nigerian Security and they include;

1. Loss of lives and property: The amount of property been lost or damaged during election and the lives expounded to violence could increase if not properly checked.
2. Political violence is a serious challenge to national security and causes government's loss of revenue and assets.
3. Ethnic tension and crisis: Election is always characterized with the employment of ethnicity, superiority, marginalization and secession discussion. This could be triggered during election to cause civil war and crisis.
4. Escalation of conflicts: The tension during election crisis and violence could instigate wider conflicts between or amongst various groups. The loser and the winner conflict might escalate into full grown national crisis.
5. Disruption of educational activities: Political violence has disrupted educational activities and consequently school calendar is extended. This adversely influences the duration students would spend in school, thereby attracting more expenditure on parents. More worrisome is exposing students to social vices like drug addiction, alcohol, armed robbery, prostitutions among other vices (Aver, et al, 2013).
6. Negative social interrelationship: Violence negates peaceful coexistence and reduce the respect individuals have for each other's lives. In a society whereby lives can easily be taken, crime escalation and vices will follow suit. This has negative impact on national security.
7. False democracy: Though election alone does not make government work optimally, the amount of loyalty given to a government that gets power illegally affects the people's input into the government. The distrust the people have in the government makes them lose faith in the government.

8. Adverse impact of the overall development of the country is affected: It has been noted that various elements employed during election to cause crisis move further to carry out vices and operations on their own hereby causing havoc to the state.

The concept of National security

Security could be magnified to consider National Security and defense of a state. Section 14 (2) (b) of 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) on the Fundamental Objectives and Direct principles of state policy provides that "security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government". In view of this, the following definitions of National Security shall be stated and examined within the context of this study.

Gbanite (2012) defines national security as the ability of the state to successfully pursue her national interests, protect her core values and be able to achieve victory in case of a war. He further notes that if the individual was not secured, the state cannot be secured and if the state is under attack from an external or internal source, the state and the individual cannot be secured. This view perceives national security from the traditional threats and the protection of national interest through the use of military force.

Azazi (2012) defines national security as the maintenance of the survival and prosperity of a nation through the protection of the personal, physical, economic, social, resource, environmental, food, natural borders and other threats to quality of life and state's survival. Azazi's definition captures the broad view of national security which could be influenced by military and non-military factors arising from within or outside a nation.

Methodology

Multiple method of data collection to gather rich information was adapted in bit to derive relevant information sufficient for this study. This study adopted primary and secondary sources of data collection. Primary data collection method was explored in order to enhance the originality of data collected via questionnaire and one on one interview. The instrument used for the study is the design and administration of well-structured questionnaire to collect the required research data respondents. The questionnaires were designed to guide the respondents in order to supply only the relevant answers and information for the study. The questionnaire therefore had a brief personal data on each respondent. Simple Random sampling technique was adopted to ensure effective and objective coverage of the study population. Survey research design was adopted in this study.

Theoretical Framework

Frustration Aggression Theory by John Dollard (1939) was used for the paper, because it is most suitable for the study. The theory, proposed in 1939 by John Dollard and colleagues, asserts that (a) frustration always produces an aggressive urge and (b) aggression is always the result of prior frustrations.

The frustration-aggression theory states that frustration often leads to aggressive behavior. If a goal is being blocked, people often become frustrated. If we're feeling very angry at the source of that frustration, we may become aggressive.

The frustration-aggression theory states that frustration often leads to aggressive behavior. Psychologists say that stress leads to frustration, and frustration leads to anger. When anger keeps growing, this turns into hate. Eventually, when someone is full of hate long enough, this explodes into violence. Violence can be verbal or physical.

According to Berkowitz, frustration will lead to aggression to the extent that it elicits negative emotions. Moreover, frustration is only one form of unpleasant negative affect that can provoke violent responses. The theory says that aggression is the result of blocking, or frustrating, a person's efforts to attain a goal. The theory says that frustration causes aggression, but when the source of the frustration cannot be challenged, the aggression gets displaced onto an innocent target.

Discussion and Findings

From the discussions demonstrated in the study, it is apparent that the Nigeria State is beset by the cankerworm of political violence which, to all intents and purposes, retards democratic consolidation. It has brought disenchantment and disillusionment in the entire polity and the democratic project. As a matter of fact, the realities that spelt doom for the past Republics are still endemic and prevalent in Nigeria. Poverty, unemployment, hunger, corruption, politically motivated killings, abductions, religious bigotry, to mention a few, are still conspicuous in Nigeria's political firmament.

Conclusion

The outcome of this research revealed, among others, some obvious causes of political violence in Nigeria as; fragile implementation of electoral law, government influence of electoral justice system, corruption in the judicial systems, bad attitudes of some corrupt law enforcement agencies, poor economy and youth unemployment, high level of illiteracy and ignorance, religion affiliation and ethnicity and clash of different political interest.

The following impacts of political violence were revealed from the results of the analysis as, loss of lives, destruction of property, low pace of development and progress, prevention foreign and local investors from investing in Nigeria, high level of dependency ratio, and encouragement of corruption and embezzlement of public fund, injustices and political tension.

Recommendations

In view of the negative effects of political violence on the socio-economic resources of the nation, the study recommends as follows:-

i. Regular research should be conducted to assess any areas or issues that will result to pre or post-election violence in Nigeria.
ii. Effective empowerment of the law enforcement agencies in charge of election conduct and monitoring in Nigeria.
iii. Voter education campaigns should be encouraged.
iv. The youths should be economically empowered. Engaging the youth in gainful employment would reduce their activities or participation in political violence.
v. Political parties should be made to play politics according to the rules of the game.
vi. Politicians should not use ethnicity and religion to galvanize support and polarize the populace through politics of religious deception and ethnic chauvinism which have stirred up sentiments and sparked communal violence perennially in Nigeria.
vii. There should be strict enforcement of electoral laws and regulations in all States of the Federation.
viii. The government at all levels must ensure strict compliance of politicians to electoral laws and play to the rules and regulation guiding the conduct of elections in Nigeria.
ix. The authorities in charge of elections should organize regular pre-election training workshops and seminars for aspiring political candidates, in order to educate them on the danger of political violence on the nation's economy and democracy.

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Nigeria-Ussr Relations During The Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970

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Abstract
This paper discussed the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and the Soviet Union during the Nigerian Civil War, between 1967-1970. However, this paper outlined the major developments between the two countries during this period. At the time, Nigeria was facing major civil unrest due to the power struggle between the federal government and some separatist groups, known as the 'Biafrans'. This led to a civil war between Nigeria and the secessinost Biafra during which the Nigerian Federal Government requested external support from its allies. The Soviet Union was one of the nations that responded to the situation and provided military and intelligence support to the federal government. The Soviet Union's involvement in the Nigerian Civil War was not only one of direct military engagement. They also provided diplomatic aid in the form of economic and political support. This was evident in the Soviets' condemnation of the UN's role in the conflict and their refusal to recognise the authority of the federal government. The findings of this study show that, as the conflict progressed, the level of Soviet aid increased with the provision of weapons and the relocation of diplomats in the region. This paper examined the motivations behind Soviet's effort in supporting Federal Republic of Nigeria in the Nigerian Civil War. It also discussed the wider implications of the Nigeria-Soviet relations and the extent to which it impacted the outcome of the conflict. Finally, the paper sought to assess the legacy of this conflict and its implications for the international relations between the two countries. This research relied on secondary sources of information such as books, chapters in books, thesis /dissertations, Articles, conference papers, and internet materials.
Keywords: Nigeria, USSR, Civil War, Biafra.

Introduction

Nigeria-Soviet relations, as a matter of fact, can be traced back to 1960. In December 1960, the then Soviet Union, whose remnant since 1991 called the Russian Federation, opened its embassy in Lagos, but to the detriment that Balewa's government could not reciprocate until 1962; [12] The relationship between the two countries in the early 1960s was regarded just as 'stagnant drop of water in a frying pan'. Throughout 1960-1967, before the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war, in Nigeria, the image of the USSR was almost tarnished by Western propaganda. More to be surprised was that the Soviet Union was referred to as the 'evil world' while the Western world was referred to as Ilu-Oba (city of kings).

With the influence of the West on the Nigerian Prime Minister, Sir. Tafawa Balewa Regime, it was reported that in 1960 Nigerian government rejected a soft loan of £20 million at a 2% interest rate from the Soviets. Nigeria, a former colony of Britain, had little in relation to the Soviets and their satellites. Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, who was the architect of Nigeria's "non-alignment policy, could not freely relate with the Soviets and did not only follow the dictates of the West, but his regime was also rabidly pro-West, so much so that he demonstrated apparent abhorrence of the USSR and other Eastern communist states[13].

Though Nigeria got its independence during the midst of the Cold War and has been independent of Britain, it (Nigeria) in one way or another paid no attention to the Soviets. Nigeria, in line with most developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, which gained independence from their various colonial powers during the Cold War era, embarked upon a policy of non-alignment[14]. Thus, the formal diplomatic exchange between the Soviet Union and Nigeria failed to translate into cordial and fruitful relations[15]. Omotuyi argues in line with Onafowokan that a combination of the Western ideological orientation of the national leaders, colonial legacy, and the nature of Nigerian political and economic systems presumed that the Soviet Union would not be welcomed in Nigeria with open arms. Therefore, the Soviet Union and Nigerian relations could be described as ranging from cold to lukewarm.[16]

Evidence had shown that Nigeria's foreign policy in its first republic was pro-West and Sir. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa never hid his bias against the Soviets[17]. Sunday also agrees that Balewa had solemnly assured the British government that he (Balewa) and his other cabinet colleagues were determined that:

[12] Abdulrasaq S. "Nigeria-USSR Bilateral Relations" M.A Dissertation. University of Maiduguri, 2024, p.21.
[13] Sunday, O. "Russo/Nigerian Relations in the Context of Counterinsurgency Operation in Nigeria" *Jabalpur Journal of International Relations* (2018), p..3. Volume 23, Issue 1.
[14] NAM: Is an International Organization dedicated to representing the interest and aspirations of developing countries
[15] Sunday O., 2018
[16] Sunday O., 2018
[17] Sunday, O. 2018, p..6. Volume 23, Issue 1.

> While we are responsible for the government of the Federation of Nigeria and the welfare of its people, we shall use every means in our power to prevent the infiltration of communism and communist ideas into Nigeria[18].

Perhaps the political and Economic orientation of National leaders and colonial legacy led to the irrational background of Nigeria and USSR relations until after Nigeria's Civil War, when the USSR enjoyed Nigeria's foreign trade, and Nigeria in terms of education.[19] As the saying goes, "There are no permanent friends or enemies in international relations but permanent interests" This maxim reshaped the Nigeria-USSR, USA, France, Britain and some other countries in a global circle.

Abimbola, in his article "Russia/Nigeria Diplomatic Ties: An Historical Perspective"[20], agrees with Obasekola that in 1965 the country was on the verge of anarchy and disintegration as a result of the violence and general strike ensuing from the 1964 general elections crisis. Probing further, despite her advent as a superpower, Russia did not utilise the revolutionary communist Situation to promote chaos, but a symbiosis and pragmatic relationship[21] but instead ensuring the rule of one Nigeria.

Background of the Nigerian Civil War

The Republic of Biafra was formed in an area in south-eastern Nigeria, predominantly inhabited by the Igbo community. To the east, it was bordered by Cameroon and to the north and west, it was bordered by the Republic of Nigeria, as described. The size of the so-called Biafra was approximately 29,000 square miles. Other tribes that inhabited this area, apart from the Igbo, included Ibibio, Efik, Annang, and Ijaw[22]. Biafra, according to the Igbo dialect, can be analysed as: *bia* means come and *fra* means to take. We, therefore, conclude that Biafra means come and take[23].

In 1960, Nigeria gained independence from Britain, followed by the massacre of the Igbo in 1966. This prompted tens of thousands of Igbos to flee back to the east[24], where their people were the dominant ethnic group. The Igbos doubted that Nigeria's oppressive military government would allow them to develop, so on May 30, 1967, Lieutenant Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu and other non-Igbo representatives of the area established the Republic of Biafra, comprising several states of Nigeria[25].

After diplomatic efforts by Nigeria failed to reunite the country, the war between Nigeria and Biafra broke out in July 1967. Ojukwu's forces made some initial advances, but Nigeria's superior military strength gradually reduced Biafran territory. The state lost its oil fields, its main source of revenue and without the funds to import food, an estimated one million of its civilians died as a result of severe malnutrition. On January 11, 1970, Nigerian forces captured the provincial capital of Owerri, one of the last Biafran strongholds, and Ojukwu was forced to flee to the Ivory Coast. Four days later, Biafra surrendered to Nigeria.

Nigeria-Soviet Relation 1967-1970

It is worth noting that Nigeria/USSR relations in early 1960 were at a low ebb, not until the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war, followed by the failure on the side of Nigeria's major allies to supply weapons to execute the war. Matusevich, in his work "Strange Bedfellows: an Unlikely Alliance between the Soviet Union and Nigeria during the Biafra War", observes that "one of the bloodiest African wars of the twentieth century ended in mid-January 1970."[26] Within days following the cessation of hostilities in Biafra, the victorious Nigerian federalists began to lavish praise on a country that, according to the Nigerian ambassador in Moscow, George T. Kurubo, contributed more than any other international actors to Nigeria's triumph over the secessionists in the East. In his laudatory remarks, the ambassador insisted that the victory over Biafra was the result of assistance from the Soviet Union.[27]

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[18] Ibid.
[19] Abdulrasaq S. "Nigeria-USSR Bilateral Relations 1960-1979" M.A Dissertation University of Maiduguri. 2024
[20] Abimbola Damilola Waliyullahi, "Russia/Nigeria Diplomatic Ties: An Historical Perspective," *European Scientific Journal* 12, no. 1 (January 2016): pp. 323-334, https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2016.v12n1p323.
[21] Abimbola D.W "Russia/Nigeria Diplomatic Ties: An Historical perspective" *University of Ibadan (2016). P. 326.*
[22]https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-was-the-republic-of-biafra.html
[23]https://www.definitions.net/definition/Biafra
[24] https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/civil-war-in-Nigeria
[25]https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/civil-war-in-Nigeria
[26] Matusevich, M. *Strange bedfellows: An unlikely alliance between the Soviet Union and Nigeria during the Biafra War*. **Cold War History, 3**(2), 21–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/713999929, 2003.
[27] Matusevich, M. *Strange bedfellows: An unlikely alliance between the Soviet Union and Nigeria during the Biafra War*. **Cold War History**

The Nigerian historic civil war of 1960 changed the atmosphere of friendship between Lagos and Moscow; Moscow assisted in maintaining the continuity of Nigeria as a united entity. Matusevich opines that the Soviet Union's involvement in the Nigerian Civil War baffled contemporary observers, including Moscow's 'Cold War rivals.[28]' As noted by several scholars of Soviet foreign policy in Africa, the first post-independence decade (1957–67) had provided little or no indication of the alliance between both countries[29]. Soviet advances had been met with a typically reluctant response. During the First Republic (1960-66), the administration of Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa kept the Soviets at bay. From Moscow's point of view, when it came to Soviet relations with independent Africa, the 1960s were a period of high but eventually dashed hopes. Under Nikita Khrushchev (1964), the Soviets exerted considerable efforts in courting the newly independent African states. On the eve of the Biafran war, the Soviet Union faced few palatable options in Africa, almost in Nigeria, whose post-independence leaders had inherited their colonial master's distaste for all things communist. In a poll conducted in 1963-64, over 40 per cent of Nigerian parliamentarians opted for closer ties with the United States and Britain, while less than two per cent of the polled expressed any interest in expanding contacts with the Soviet Union.[30]

On the eve of war, when Ojukwu pronounced the secession of eastern Nigeria (Biafra), on July 2, 1967, Yakubu Gowon sent identical cables to President Lyndon Johnson and Prime Minister Harold Wilson, pleading for the immediate sale of 'weapons' to the Federal Government of Nigeria[31]. Matusevich observes that Gowon wanted deliveries to begin within forty-eight hours and added that if the United States and Great Britain were unable to supply these weapons, he would be forced to get them from any source which would make them available to execute the war[32]. The Americans remained unimpressed, however, observing that Nigeria's political milieu made any significant Communist infiltration highly unlikely. The possibility of 'Communist arms sales' to Nigerian federalists did not sufficiently alarm Washington, at least not enough to force it to 'forsake our even-handed stance[33].

The failure on the part of the US and Britain, pushed the Nigerian government to the Eastern bloc; in late June 1967, a four-man Nigerian mission headed to Moscow, prompting immediate rumours that the visit was an arms-procurement expedition. Both Moscow and Lagos issued brief denials, but less than a month later, another Nigerian delegation went to the Soviet Union. The delegation included Chief Anthony Enahoro, the Commissioner for the Ministries of Information and Labour in the FMG and, significantly, a close political ally of the Soviet-friendly Obafemi Awolowo. On 2nd August 1967, Enahoro met with the Soviet Deputy Prime Minister, in the Kremlin, ostensibly to sign a cultural agreement, which seemed like a frivolity for a country confronting an existential crisis. Despite the mounting evidence to the contrary, both sides continued to insist that arts and sports, and not the aircraft and the bazookas, constituted the subject of the discussion. On 3rd August, Radio Moscow quoted a statement by the Nigerian embassy, which dismissed the rumours of an arms deal as 'Western propaganda'[34].

The denials lasted for a few more days until, in a meeting with the US ambassador in Lagos on 8th August 1967, the Gowon administration signed a deal for the procurement of an unspecified number of Czech aircraft, but also stressed the strictly commercial nature of the transaction. Furthermore, the Federalist leader lamented the lack of support by the British and the Americans and alluded to a 'spate of anti-Americanism' sweeping across Nigeria. Matusevich believes that Gowon had understated the scope of the agreement. In the days following the meeting between Gowon and Ambassador Matthews, Nigerian and foreign press began to report the arrival in the country of crates of Soviet and Czech aircraft (reportedly, ten to twenty MiG-15 and MiG-17 fighter trainers and up to six Delphin L-29 jet fighters), accompanied by up to 200 Soviet technicians.[35]

As a result of heavy weapons supplied by the Soviet-Czech and later through Egypt, However, the Soviet Union was now gaining in stature not only among the radicals but as a result of a new phase of relations

[28] Matusevich, M. 2003, p. 39
[29] Matusevich, M. *Strange bedfellows: An unlikely alliance between the Soviet Union and Nigeria during the Biafra War*. **Cold War History**
[30] Omotuyi, Sunday. "Russo/Nigerian Relations in the Context of Counterinsurgency Operation in Nigeria." *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations* 23, P. 48–68.
[31] Abdulrasaq S. 2024, p.48
[32] Matusevich, M., *Strange bedfellows: An unlikely alliance between the Soviet Union and Nigeria during the Biafra War*. ***Cold War History*, 3**(2), **London: Taylor & Francis**, 2003, P.38–40
[33] Memorandum from Edward Hamilton of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant (Rostov)', foreign relations of the United States, 1964– 1968, Vol. 24, Africa, Document 390(Washington, 3 July 1967), available at: https://his tory.state.gov/historical documents/frus1964-68v24/d390 (accessed on 11 March 2016).
[34] Matusevich, M., 2003, p. 26–28
[35] Matusevich, M., 2003, p. 30–31

between both actors. In 1967, the Soviets opened a new US$15,000 cultural centre in the district of Surulere in Lagos, and four Moskvich car dealerships opened doors around the country[36].

Strategic Role of Egypt in Nigeria's Civil War

Like USSR, Ghana and Egypt also played a vital role in Nigeria's civil war of 1967 – 1970; it must, however, be noted that the role played by Ghana was not the same role played by Egypt in the war; what Ghana played was just like shuttle diplomacy to prevent the war which as a result of that Lieutenant-General Joseph Arthur Ankrah of Ghana on January 4, 1967, organized a peaceful conference known as Aburi Accord which lasted for two days but this meeting failed to achieve its purpose; as popularly known if diplomacy failed what follows it usually used to war, similar was the case in Nigerian Civil war.

Egypt, on the other hand, was strategically useful for Nigerian Federalists when Czechoslovakia withdrew its support from the side of the Nigerian government. Historically, there has been cordial contact between the USSR and Egypt. The period following the military coup in Egypt in 1952 and continuing until the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1970 is an exception to this general rule[37]. Nigeria, under the regime of Gen. Yakubu Gowon at the time of civil war, was able to benefit from such a relationship between Egypt and the then USSR. Research and evidence have shown that the relationship between the Soviet government in Moscow and the Arab Socialist Union government of Nasser in Egypt reached its peak in 1964[38]. Relations on all levels between the two countries were tremendously broadened up to 1972. An intimate diplomatic relationship developed that bound the United Arab Republic (Egypt) and the Soviet Union tightly together.[39] According to John Copp, he opines that Economic interaction between the two states increased to such an extent that the total commerce between the two nations was multiplied by a factor of more than twenty between 1951 and 1970[40].

Soviet imports from Egypt increased by almost 4500 per cent during that same period. Exports showed a somewhat slower rate of increase but still rose from 21.8 million rubbles in 1951 to 326.9 million rubbles in 1970[41]. Cultural contact between the two nations also became frequent during this same period. Interaction in the cultural sphere ranged from contact between the Islamic elements in Soviet Central Asia and the Egyptian clergy; John agrees that there was, to an extent, an exchange of films and cultural centres flourished between them. It can even be explained that the increased contact between the Soviet Union and Egypt shows how dramatic the change in the relationship between the two was. As agreed above, the relationship between the Soviets and Egypt reached a certain level that Khrushchev considered President Nasser of Egypt as the "Hero of the Soviet Union."[42]

Cornwell, in his work "World History of the Twentieth" wrote thus:

> 'It is probable that by 1964, Khrushchev was becoming increasingly difficult to work with. He opines that his methods were too autocratic, and the other leading Russians disliked this one-man rule. For example, he made President Nasser of Egypt a hero of the Soviet Union, and he promised him £ 100 loan without consulting his fellow ministers in Moscow …'[43]

In light of the cordial relations between Egypt and the Soviets, Nigeria, under the leadership of General Yakubu Gowon, was able to benefit from such relations when Czechoslovakia withdrew its support from the side of Nigeria. During this time of hostility Soviet Union was left with no option but to seek an alternative route of supplying arms to the Federalist Nigeria; therefore, the USSR considered Egypt as the only alternative and strategic route for supplying weapons to Nigerian Federalists to execute the war.[44]

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that Nigeria–Soviet relations, which were initially distant in the early years of Nigeria's independence from her formal colonial master, were fundamentally transformed by the exigencies of the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970). Although Nigeria officially pursued a policy of non-alignment, its foreign policy orientation in the First Republic was largely pro-Western, resulting in suspicion and minimal engagement

[36] Stanley E. Orobator, *"Diplomacy and conflict resolution in international relations: The Soviet Union and the Nigerian crisis"* Uniben Press, (1997).
[37] John Copp W. "*Egypt and The Soviet Union, 1953-1970"* Portland State University, 1986, p.83
[38] Corwell R.D *"World History in the Twentieth Century"* Longman Group Limited *1980,* p.109
[39] John Coop W. 1986, p.111
[40] John Coop W.
[41] John Coop W P.1.
[42] Corwell R.D *"World History in the Twentieth Century" (1980)*
[43] Corwell R.D, 1980, p. 67
[44] Abdulrasaq S. "Nigeria-USSR Relations 1960 – 1991" M.A Dissertation University of Maiduguri 2023.

with the Soviet Union. However, the outbreak of the civil war and the reluctance of Britain and the United States to supply military assistance to the Federal Government compelled Nigeria to reassess its external alliances. This strategic vacuum created an opportunity for the Soviet Union to emerge as a crucial diplomatic and military partner, thereby redefining the nature of bilateral relations between the two states.

Furthermore, the paper has shown that Soviet involvement in the Nigerian Civil War was driven less by ideological expansionism and more by pragmatic geopolitical considerations. By supplying arms, technical assistance, and diplomatic backing to the Federal Military Government, the Soviet Union played a significant role in preserving Nigeria's territorial integrity and strengthening the federal war effort. The strategic use of Egypt as an intermediary route for arms supply further illustrates the complexity and adaptability of Soviet foreign policy in Africa during the Cold War. Ultimately, the alliance between Nigeria and the Soviet Union during the civil war underscored the primacy of national interest over ideological alignment in international relations. The legacy of this relationship not only contributed to the federal victory but also laid the foundation for a more pragmatic and diversified Nigerian foreign policy in the post-war period.

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The Language Of Feminism And Its Impact On The Society Using The Work Of Mariama Ba's So Long A Letter

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Abstract
This study examines the language of feminism and its societal impact through Mariama Ba's seminal novel **"So Long a Letter"**. Published in 1979, the epistolary narrative critiques patriarchal norms in Senegalese society and foregrounds the struggles of women within a restrictive sociocultural framework. The novel not only exposes gender-based oppression but also advocates for women's empowerment and self-assertion. Grounded in feminist theory and employing a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, this paper explores how Ba's narrative subverts dominant masculine discourses and challenges the systematic silencing of women's voices and experiences. It further analyzes the intersection of feminist themes with broader historical and cultural contexts, including colonialism, Islam, and traditional African values. Through close examination of language, character, and theme, the study positions **So Long a Letter** as a powerful feminist manifesto that contributes significantly to the development of feminist thought and activism in Africa and beyond, using literature as a tool of resistance and transformation.
Keywords: Feminism, power, language, culture, gender, activism, patriarchy.

Introduction

The struggle for women's right began in the 18th century during the period of intense intellectual activity known as the Age of Enlightenment. In traditional Africa the woman is an object of constant scorn, degradation and physical torture. In the past, women did not exist as individuals with personalities to defend. They rather existed as mere docile and exotic accompaniments to the males. Throughout that period, women lacked a voice to articulate their dilemma and their points of view. They, thus, accepted their fate without resistance. Such passive stance results from societal conditioning through questionable cultural practices.

From birth, through childhood and adolescence, to adulthood, Africans receive from society and others around the messages and feedbacks which launch them into roles and behaviors considered appropriate for males and females respectively. Most often, female are accorded inferior roles and such long years of cultural suppression and intimidation, unfortunately, misled the women into an underestimation of their capabilities and self-worth. Encased in such a cultural mystique, the African women were particularly driven by a community sense since culture obviates individualism. In those days, the women, in addition to experiencing the same oppressive social condition as their male counterparts in a developing world, were subjected to extra repressive burdens arising from the sociocultural structures of patriarchy and gender hierarchy. The years of subjugation have, however, produced in today's women relentless questioning of the status quo. They protest against dehumanization, political enslavement and social oppression. They rationalize that the running of the Africa world is not the preserve for males and thus there should be absolute equality of both sexes in all spheres of life. Such a reaction is termed feminism, which is an ideology that urges, in simple terms, recognition of the claims of women for equal rights with men.

According to Cora Kaplan, "Literary texts are true which surrounds them; so too are the literary critical claims about their truthfulness or authenticity determined by the culture from which they arise" (162). Helen Chukwuma (xiv) specifically contends that African feminism is dedicated and informed from within, from

social realities that obtain. One of such realities is the persistence of sexist socio-psychological paradigm despite the efforts to overcome "the androcentricism which informs social life" (Uko 33). The persistent sexism in Africa is, however, matched with women's continued aggressive demand for equal places in men's former citadel of power and privilege. The chorus African women say to men, "Whatever the case maybe, you will never again hear us pronounce the words of the Virgin Mary, 'thy will be done,' while smiling at your despotic power" (Josephine Felicite in Moses and Rabine). They argue that it is better for men to desire from them those noble and generous feelings which must exist between equals than those mercenary feelings which a slave has for his master.

Consequent upon the foregoing quest and argument, there is a recent definition of womanhood in the context of the African cosmic order: "A human being endowed with all the capabilities and talents required to effectively function and make impact on all levels of life within society" (Adeife Osemeikhiam 21). Notwithstanding the above stance, there still abounds in Africa evidence of gender stereotypes, which simply means a collection of commonly held beliefs or opinions about what are "appropriate" behaviors and activities for males and those that are "appropriate" for females. As a result of this, even though men support women's condemnation of their (women) societal deprivations, men's language still betrays subtle inclination to sexist socialization.

According to The New Lexicon Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language, sexism is exemplified firstly as attitudes and institutions, often unconscious that judge human worth on the grounds of gender or sex. It is explained as prejudice or discrimination, usually against women, based on their gender. Sexist socialization, therefore, refers to the process by which infants and children are brought up to imbibe attitudes and practices that discriminate against women on the grounds of their gender. This work examines **So Long a Letter** with a view to highlight its characteristic language usage as well as the psychological disposition that informs such use of language. Research findings by anthropologists, educationists, and sociolinguists show that traditionally, males use non-standard language; females use the language of rapport while males use the language of report; discursive language style is meant for women while men are given to the language of theories and abstractions; females use polite language meant to maintain harmony and strong relationships as well as to keep conversations open, whereas males use the language of assertiveness and insistence. Women use the language of solidarity, but men use the language of the expert.

Aim and Objectives.

i. This work aims to elucidate feminist language and discourse in Mariama Ba's So Long a Letter and its impact on challenging patriarchal structures in Senegalese society and beyond.

Objectives

ii. To analyze how **So Long a Letter** critiques patriarchal norms and traditions within Senegalese society;
iii. To explore how the novel promotes women's empowerment and agency, and
iv. To position the novel as a significant feminist manifesto within African and global feminist thought.

Literature Review

The struggle to rejuvenate the wounded dignity of African womanhood has been a dominating theme over the years. The situation still prevails even in this age of modernism. The African women have to fight against an oppressive culture and its attendant discrimination against their sex in order to survive. The oppressive nature of the African culture sparked off the reaction termed feminism, which is one of the prominent ideologies that have continued to attract critical attention all over the world. A number of writers have attempted to analyze the ideology from different perspectives, and this has led to the prevalence of many theories of feminism. Olajuyigbe defines language as "a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures or marks which have understood meaning. It is a system of conventional vocal or graphic symbols by which human beings co-operate" (8). This co-operation cuts across the various domains in which people relate with one another. Osakwe explains that "the language we use is very powerful and loaded. It is usually the only genetically endowed information storage system that humans have" (128). This implies that all our experiences and memories are, to a large extent, encoded in some language system. She highlights that great linguists and psycholinguists have established that language and behavior are related. The language we speak clearly reflects the very way we think and behave. That is to say, our speech exposes our thoughts, feelings, behavior, and attitude. The following biblical excerpts confirm this assertion: "A man's words betray what he feels. Speech reflects true feelings" (Sirach 27:4); "… a man's words flow out of what fills his heart" (Luke 6:45).

In Lindgren's contention, "language implements and reflects culturally determined attitude and values and helps to reinforce, sustain and perpetuate them" (318–26). He adds that the kind of language used by a communicator indicates his identity in terms of culture. In line with the above contention, Okolo argues that "language is very fundamental in the understanding of man and his social life" (18). He asserts that language creates sexist attitudes. Many studies, including Strainchamps (18), have been carried out to investigate the connection between language use and sexist attitudes. Strainchamps indicates that sexism and sexist language and attitudes are some of the ways an oppressive society maintains the status quo. Faust notes that "men have used language effectively to oppress women. Through the power of language, men have controlled not only women's behavior but their thoughts" (10).

Characteristic Features of Male and Female Language

Meunier contends that "the socialization process male and females undergo sets various types of preferential cognitive networks." She also notes that gender-specific psyches stem from nurture rather than nature (1). Research indicates that gender-specific patterns of behavior are best analyzed through language. Studies by Labov consistently indicate that females use a more standard language than men, regardless of their socio-economic level, age, or race (16). Several researchers such as Lakoff (15), Godwin (10), Maltz and Borker (8), and Cameron (in Meunier 1) attribute this difference to the result of early childhood socialization processes. In Lakoff's explanation, "girls are encouraged and rewarded for using 'elegant' language whereas boys are allowed more flexibility and roughness in language use: 'Rough talk is discouraged in little girls more strongly than in little boys, in whom parents may often find it more amusing than shocking'" (15).

Cameron bases his contribution on early childhood activities. He points out that "children's activities shape various styles of speech: 'Boys tend to play in large groups organized hierarchically; thus they learn direct, confrontational speech. Girls play in small groups of 'best friends,' where they learn to maximize intimacy and minimize conflicts'" (7). In place of standard language, Milary (20), Cheshire (6), and Coates (10), in Meunier (1), state that males use a more vernacular style than females. Three reasons are offered as responsible for this difference. First, the difference is said to have resulted from the female's greater desire to conform to societal norms. Secondly, the difference is said to have stemmed from a sexist view that traditionally stresses that females are naturally more dependent than males. Thirdly, the difference is attributed to a historical perspective which notes that languages evolve from vernacular forms, and as such, speaking non-standard forms is an expression of both freedom and creative power in which women are not allowed to participate. The assumption that non-standard forms are lacking in elegance when spoken by a woman projects the illocutionary force of prohibition.

Johnson and Roen's study on the use of compliments, according to Meunier, shows that males use compliments that reflect actual evaluation, which is the language of the expert, whereas females use a complimenting discourse that makes the interlocutor feel good, which is the language of solidarity (44; Meunier 1). Meunier notes that the above conclusions should be considered with caution since language use also varies according to situational conditions (1). This notwithstanding, the fact remains that anthropologists continually observe gender-specific patterns for conversational interaction, and that, as such, males and females are considered to be part of separate speech communities (Tannen 55) and to use different genderlects. In Egbe's words, "there is a difference between the language of men and women, and this essentially arises from the influence of culture, traditional norms of speech, and upbringing" (14). In agreement with the above argument, the language of Mariama Bâ differs significantly notwithstanding her discussion of the same issue of discrimination and oppression of the African person.

Meaning of Feminism

Feminism, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, "is the belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men; the struggle to get this aim." Oniemayin notes that feminism does not question the divine injunction of the submissiveness of the wives to their husbands. However, this submissiveness is not a mark of mediocrity because women have distinguished themselves in diverse human endeavors (11). The object of feminism is the transformation of the woman from her traditional state of unfulfillment to an elated state of unfulfilment. For Helen Chukwuma, it is "a rejection of inferiority and a striving for recognition. It seeks to give a woman a sense of self as a worthy, effectual and contributing human being. It is a reaction against such stereotypes of women which deny them a positive identity. It sets out to enhance the position of women in a predominantly male-oriented society" (ix). Chukwuma states that what feminist writers articulate is the dire need of African women for recognition and partnership. She further asserts that feminism is based on the theory of individuality, recognition of the personhood of women, and equal opportunity for development (ix). Feminism began and flowered in Europe and America, but today, it

has taken root in Africa. Feminist writing in Africa shows the difficult process of female self-actualization. It takes the process of the woman's self-knowledge and self-hood.

Theories of Feminism

Akin-Aina and Taiwo indicate that in the treatment of inequality between men and women, patriarchy is intoned. However, though patriarchy is a discernible social phenomenon, it is not itself a feminist theory (17). It means "rule by the father." The term was originally used to refer to a system of government in which older men governed women and younger men through their position as heads of households. Today, the term is more loosely used to describe systematic power inequalities between men and women, a social institution where men dominate, oppress, and exploit women, and in which these negative social relations are reproduced and maintained. The subject matter of feminist creative and critical work is the totality of the female experience in all its forms and manifestations. There are, however, different methods of analyzing the subject matter. This gives rise to the existence of many known theories of feminism such as Liberal Feminism, Marxist Feminism, Radical Feminism, Socialist Feminism, and Third World Feminism.

Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in feminist literary theory, particularly focusing on: Gender power dynamics: how societal structures and traditions marginalize women.
Voice and agency: How women resist, reclaim space, and assert identity.
Discourse analysis: Drawing from feminist discourse analysis to examine how language is used to either reinforce or resist patriarchy.

Methodology

This empirical review adopts a qualitative approach to examine the linguistic projection of female subjugation in Mariama Bâ's So Long a Letter. It employs feminist literary criticism as its primary analytical framework, focusing on how language is used to express, reinforce, or challenge patriarchal norms within the novel. Through thematic and character analysis, the review explores how linguistic choices reflect the lived experiences of women in a postcolonial African context. Relevant literature from feminist theory, African studies, and discourse analysis is integrated to provide a contextual foundation for interpreting the novel's portrayal of female subjugation.

Findings

In Nwachukwu's contention, "the African woman is known to be stoically wedded to toil. From birth, she works tirelessly not to shame her family, her womanhood and later, her motherhood. She gives all to others. She tragically tends to love her very own pains and neither sees nor checks her scars. She is exploited till she is useful no more. Yet, neither society nor her male counterpart appreciates her and her efforts. She, thus, feels aggrieved and groans under the weight of such subjugation and gives vent to her groaning through the use of special linguistic features as illustrated in **So Long a Letter**. Through the novel, Ba preserves the seriousness of woman's agony through the use of parallelism, linguistic foregrounding, and semantic compounding" (25).

Parallelism

Ramatoulaye's reminiscence of the dejection she suffers as a result of her condescension in marrying Modou Fall who turns out to be a chauvinistic billboard cashing in on cultural postulations about womanhood makes her drown in a river of regrets and rage.

Marriage without dowry, without pomp, under
disapproval looks of my father, before the painful
indignation of my frustrated mother, under the sarcastic
remarks of my surprised sisters In our town silenced by
astonishment (29)

The parallel structures in the above are;
Without + pomp
Under + (disapproving) looks
Marriage + before + (the painful) indignation
Under + (the sarcastic) remarks
By + astonishment
This linguistic pattern can be represented as
Preposition + noun phrase2

Preposition + noun phrase2
Preposition + noun phrase2
Noun phrase1 + Preposition + noun phrase2
Preposition + noun phrase2
The five prepositions are in paradigmatic relationship with one another. In other words, they belong to the same grammatical category just as the five noun phrases (NP2) also belong to the same paradigm. In this pattern, the preposition is repeated five times. The elaborate NP2s expose Ramatoulaye's condescension in marrying Modou Fall. This elaborate syntactic repetition is specifically employed to project vividly the enormity of Modou's selfless love and sacrifice to their marriage.
As Mariama Ba selects more examples of parallel structures, she carefully establishes that connection between the linguistic items and the literary scenario she paints as in the following examples:

You added the small building at the far end:
three small, simple bedrooms, a bathroom, a kitchen.
You grew many flowers in a few corners.
You had a hen run built, then a closed pen for sheep. (22)

The parallel structures here are:
• You added the small building
• You grew many flowers
• You built a hen run, closed pen
• NP1 + VP + NP2
• NP1 + VP + NP2
NP1 + VP + NP2
The three verb phrases
Added
Grew
Built
are in paradigmatic relationship with one another just as these four noun phrases
The small building
Many flowers
A hen run
A closed pen
belong to the same paradigm. Since parallelism, according to Geoffrey Leech in Yankson, "sets up a relationship of equivalence between linguistic items and strongly urges a connection between them," the use of parallel structures here invests the three verb phrases (VPs) and the four noun phrases (NPs) with the same value (17). That is, "added," "grew," and "built" are related synonymously under the general semantic feature /improvement/. Similarly, the four noun phrases—"building," "flowers," "hen run," and "closed pen"—share the semantic feature /property/.

Linguistic Foregrounding
In the text, Ramatoulaye tries in her effort to give or attach a great importance to her husband by looking down on his faults and doing her duties well as a wife. Her conviction that she has executed these duties satisfactorily and honorably in accordance with societal dictates sharpens the pangs of Modou Fall's tyranny and forces her to recount her dedication and suffering with pronounced venom.

... to think that I loved this man passionately, to
think I gave him thirty years of my life, to think that
twelve times over I carried his child. (12)
the parallel structures are;

Verb Phrase
Loved
Gave
Carried
The three Verb Phrases are related synonymously under the semantic features / tenderness /, / dedication /.
Yankson (3) notes that one feature of literary language is what is technically referred to as foregrounding and an example is pattern repetition. In this text, the repetition of the infinitive "to think" a number of times foregrounds the message and underlines the emphasis which the use of a single infinitive "to think" would not have conveniently done. Its stylistic significance is to achieve rhetorical emphasis: to bring the message to the

forefront of the reader's mind in order to show clearly that Ramatoulaye has made much sacrifice to Modou Fall and thus does not deserve his treachery.

Semantic Compounding

Ba reveals the conglomerate roles a mother plays and thus to show the falseness of all men's chauvinistic tendencies with this extract:

> *... one is a mother in order to understand the inexplicable. One is a mother to lighten the darkness. One is a mother to shield when lightning streaks the night, when thunder shakes the earth, when mud bogs one down. One is a mother in order to love without beginning or end. One is a mother so as to face the flood. (82-83)*

In this extract, the VPs are;

Understand
Lighten
To + Shield
Love
Face

which are in syntagmatic relationship with the preposition "to" be positionally and naturally equivalent. They are intra-textually cohesive: they share in common the semantic feature / tranquility /. They, therefore, constitute a semantic compound, a special semantic image, which reflects Ba's personal view of motherhood in the world of the novel.

Female Characteristic Language Use in So Long a Letter

Thoughts and actions are communicated through words. Words are the tools of communication (Semmelmeyer and Bolander 90). Ba's words reflect the pensive mood of the victims of a social set-up. Words such as distress, disappointment, despair, bitterness, sadness, rancor, agitation, and pain are used preponderantly in the novel to communicate the psycho-social turbulence of the victims of patriarchy, who are women.

Standard Language: One of the outstanding features in this novel is the author's attachment to standard usage. While she uses language that is appropriate to the characters, there is also a pervasive use of standard forms. The following passage is an example:

> *How many times I have wanted to arrange this discussion, to let you know. I know what a daughter means to her mother, and Aissatou has told me so much about you, your closeness to her, that I think I know you already. I am not just looking for excitement. Your daughter is my first love. I want her to be the only one. I regret what has happened. If you agree, I will marry Aissatou. My mother will look after her child. We will continue with our studies. (84-85)*

This is Ibrahim Sall's speech during his meeting with Ramatoulaye in connection with her daughter's pregnancy. The language is standard; it does not conjure erotic emotions, yet it gives a clear picture of his ardent love for Aissatou. It is, therefore, in line with Labov's (16) and Trudgill's (101) studies, which consistently indicate that females use a more standard language than men, regardless of their socio-economic level, age, or race.

Language of Rapport

Evidence of the language of rapport abounds in the novel. One of such evidence is seen as Tamsir woes Ramatoulaye after the fortieth day of her husband's death.

"When you have "come out" (that is to say, out of mourning), I shall marry you. You suit me as a wife, and further, you will continue to live here, just as if Modou were not dead. You are my good luck. I shall marry you. I prefer you to the other one, too frivolous, too young. I advised Modou against that marriage". (57)

Tamsir, not realizing that Ramatoulaye is too enlightened to meddle in the shadowy politics of male protocol and deceit, attempts to flatter and arouse her affection for him. His effort to establish connection and negotiate relationship with Ramatoulaye is obvious in the text. The example confirms Witting's (26) view, that for

women, the language of conversation is primarily a language of rapport; a way of establishing connection and negotiating relationships.

The Discursive Language Style

This type of language is extensively used in this novel. Ramatoulaye has mustered enough courage to brace herself against unpleasant patriarchal experiences. She has refused to abandon herself to all the delirium of the manmade laws which acquire more force through their very repression. She, therefore, discusses with equanimity some issue that concern her and Aissatou her friend as seen in this excerpt.

> *Aissatou, I will never forget the white woman who was the first to desire for as an 'uncommon' destiny… we were true sisters, destined for the same mission of emancipation. To lift us out of the bog of tradition, superstition and custom, to make us appreciate a multitude of civilizations without renouncing our own, to raise our vision of the world,*

cultivate our personalities, strengthen our qualities, to make up for our inadequacies, to develop universal morals values in us: these were the aims of our admirable headmistress. The word 'love' had a particular resonance in her. She loved us without patronizing us, with our plaits either standing on end or bent down with our loose blouses, our wrappers. She knew how to discover and appreciate our qualities. (15-16),

The issue discussed here concerns the two friends. Ramatoulaye reminds Aissatou her school friend of their headmistress and her interest in and good intentions for them. There are many details which draw the reader into the discussion to efforts of the headmistress to see them from falling victims of patriarchy. Further in the novel, Ramatoulaye takes up another and issue that concerns two of them-the upbringing of their children and its challenges:

> *Aissatou, your namesake, is three months pregnant (80)… I envy you for having had only boys! You don't know the terrors I face in dealing with the problems of my daughters… Aissatou, Your namesake, caught* me unawares. (87)

The issues of male preference and superiority ensue in this discussion and Aissatou who has begotten only male children is considered luckier than Ramatoulaye who has both males and females. Her (Ramatoulaye's) daughter's teenage pregnancy makes the limitations of female children clear and thus drives home the traditional male superiority. Ibrahim Sall who is responsible for the pregnancy does not have body changes to expose him as "father-to-be" (85).

This linguistic style agrees with Jone's (30) views that women are more likely to use a discursive language style that allows for the discussion of interactional topics and for personalizing conversations.

Polite Language

So Long a Letter is replete with examples of polite language use. The language with which Ramatoulaye conjectures the cause of her husband's misdemeanor is polite. Modou Fall's betrayal of Ramatoulaye's trust in him is dumbfounding. Yet she avoids vulgar language and gives vent to her anger politely.

i. Was it madness, weakness, irresistible love? What inner confusion led Modou Fall to marry Binetou? (11)

ii. Madness or weakness? Heartlessness or irresistible love? What inner Torment led Modou Fall to marry Binetou? (12)

iii. And I ask myself, I ask myself, why? Why did Modou detach himself? Why did he put Binetou between us? (56).

Thus, Ramatoulaye, though infuriated by Modou's treachery, tries to puzzle out the probable reason behind his action in polite language. Such use of language is in line with Holmes (28) and Coates's (33) contention that women are observed to speak in a more tentative way, using more tag questions in general. Holmes (29) further explains that such language use indicates that women are more polite and more suggestive than men.

Polite language can equally be employed to achieve confrontation. By asking questions without any frills at their edges, women may use politeness strategically. This excerpt, therefore, confirms Brown's (40) observation that women can employ politeness in a sarcastic way to achieve confrontation.

Language of Solidarity

Ramatoulaye recognizes Aissatou as a self-actualized person. According to Shostrom (ix) and Maslow (v), as cited in Osakwe (128), self-actualized persons tend to be more independent than other groups of individuals.

This excerpt is an example of polite language deliberately chosen to scorn men's hypocritical approval of female political equality.

> *When will we have the first female minister involved in the decisions concerning the development of our country? ...when will education be decided for children on the basis not of sex but of talent? (61)*

Ramatoulaye in this excerpt confronts Daouda Dieng who creates the false impression that women have been given the opportunity to participate in the nation's politics. She debunks his idea by politely pointing out areas of overt deprivation in the country's governance. Further in the novel, she specifically reminds Dieng that there are only four women out of hundred deputies in the National Assembly. "Four women, Daouda, four out of hundred deputies" (60). Ramatoulaye's tone in this discussion of the internal cycle of political intimidation and deprivation of women is between friendly hostility and playful contempt. She asks her to be more independent than other groups of individuals. This quality stems from their being courageous, inventive, original and energetic. Despite their tendency to be independent, they show more love to others than other people do. They also have a high tendency to transcend dichotomies… and part of their love is shown in their being highly devoted to solving problems that will benefit others. Aissatou exhibits these qualities. She courageously divorces her husband rather than share him with another woman. Like a lioness, she gallantly walks the path to the bourgeois class. She transcends the status quo by working in the Senegalese Embassy. Thus, she earns her money by dint of hard work and she demonstrates a great sense of comradeship by helping Ramatoulaye out of the problem of mobility with the gift of a car. This gift is made to Ramatoulaye at a point when her life is laden with the burden of present harsh realities and the past unpleasant experiences that preceded them. Ramatoulaye, therefore, could not keep under control, her overwhelming admiration and appreciation of Aissatou's sense of esprit de corps. By way of compliment, she rates Aissatou's friendship even higher than love and notes that their relationship has extended beyond friendship to unite their children as brothers and sisters.

> *You have often proved to me the superiority of friendship over love. Time, distance, as well as mutual memories have consolidated our ties and made our children brothers and sisters(72)*

Ramatoulaye extends her compliments to other aspects of her friend's life. Aissatou, having become an accomplished woman, is believed to have imbibed some aspects of the modern life. Ramatoulaye, therefore, speculates on her preferences with regard to dressing the table etiquette. The vertebra of her humor has not broken under the weight of life's tragic pressures. She, thus, teases Aissatou with guesses about her present manner of dressing as well insistence on Aissatou's return to the traditional table etiquette:

> *So, then, will I see you tomorrow in a tailored suit or a long dress? I've taken a bet with Daba: tailored suit. Used to living far away, you will want- again, I have taken a bet with Daba- table, plate, chair, fork. ...But I will not let you have your way. I will spread out a mat. On it there will be the big, stemming bowl into which you will to accept hat other hands dip. (89)*

Ramatoulaye is well aware that her friend will feel good at being reminded of her style of yester years. Such a language as this conforms to Johnson and Roe's (44) contention that females use a complimenting discourse that makes the interlocutor feel good and that is, the language of solidarity

Summary

The African tradition disapproves criteria, which damage women's equality with men. In African society and culture, the male is regarded superior, as the central and neutral position from which the female is a departure. This aligns with Simon de Beauvoir's (16) assertion:

> *Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him: She is not regarded as an autonomous being. She is defined and differentiated with reference to men and not with reference to her: she is the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the absolute she is the other.*

Women's sensibility to the need to rediscover their wounded dignity has, however, been heightened. Such

sensitization has led to the relentless questioning of patriarchy. The case they make is that although men and women show marked biological differences, they are equally talented, and as such, the issue of sexist socialization should be condemned. The dissemination of information on feminism not only brought this awareness into the female consciousness but also led women to break the shackles of patriarchy through writing. Notwithstanding this shared preoccupation, the language with which each category of writers pursues the female issue highlights an enduring sexist paradigm.

Ba's language in **So Long a Letter** indicates the use of conversation/rapport, standard language, polite language achieved through the use of questions, the discursive language style, as well as the language of solidarity. The male–female linguistic dichotomy reflected in **So Long a Letter** is attributed to patriarchy. Cameron states that gender-specific linguistic differences lead to gender-specific conversational strategies (7). Steinem specifies that conversational patterns between males and females have been found to reflect social inequalities existing between them (60). Daly states that the language use by females historically stems from oppressive structures whereby women address men as their masters (57). Meunier observes that a man could address his wife as a master, his wife as a slave, and a king as a subject, that is, using a clear rhetoric of authority (1). This implies that language plays a significant role in amplifying lines of gender distinction. This contention is confirmed by Spender, who states that:

> *The semantic rule which has been responsible for the manifestation of Sexism in the language can simply be stated; they are two fundamental categories, male and minus male. To be linked with male is to be linked to a range of meanings which are positive and good. To be linked to minus male is to be linked to the absence of these qualities…*
> *the semantic structure of the English language reveals a great deal about what it means to be female in a patriarchal order.*

Webster (79) adds that language is constitutive of knowledge as

> *Discourse and it is possible to see the privileging of the male position and the establishment of a patriarchal order in broader historical and discursive ways as well as in everyday or literary language.*

Women's lamentation over male subjugation has in recent years filtered into a determination to abnegate sexism. With this stand, their former conciliatory position becomes superseded by a current of revolt against man and tradition as highlighted through semantic compounding and linguistic parallelism in **So Long a Letter**. We have a right, just as you have, to education, which
Rwe ought to be able to pursue to the farthest limits of our intellectual capacities. We have a right to equal well-paid employment, to equal opportunities. The right to vote is an important weapon. (61)

The linguistic pattern here is:

		NP
		Education
To	+	Equal opportunities
		Vote

in this pattern, the NPs which are in syntagmatic relationship with the preposition "to" are positionally and naturally equivalent. They are intratextually cohesive and share in common the semantic feature / privileges /. They, therefore, constitute a semantic compound, a special semantic image which reflects Ba's view of the desire of women in the world of the novel. For her, women should enjoy equal privileges with their male counterparts. In other words, the running of the African world is not preserved only for males. Rather, there should be absolute equality of both sexes in all spheres of life.

With the present stance of the African, women compromise is replaced by criticism and condemnation of the male victimize as illustrated with Ramatoulaye's revolt against Tamsir's offer to marry her:

> *What of your wives, Tamsir? Your income cannot meet their needs nor those of your numerous children. To help you out with your financial*

obligations, one of your wives dyes, another sells
fruits, the third untiringly turns the handle of her
sewing machine. (58)

In this text, the three verb phrases;

VP	NP
Dyes	(Cloth)
Sells	Fruit
(untiringly) turns	Sewing machine

are in paradigmatic connected/relationship with one another just as the three noun phrases also belong to the same paradigm. That is, the three VPs are related synonymously under the general semantic feature / petty trade /. Similarly, the three noun phrases share the semantic feature / little value /. Acting in line either societal dictates and expectation, Tamsir's three wives fill his home with numerous children. As is usual with African polygamous homes, Tamsir who has married them not out of love or affection, but merely to meet his own selfish desire for variety, cares little to meet their needs. These women, therefore, strive to fend for themselves.
In further portrayal of women's reputation of male egotism, with the use of linguistic foregrounding, Ramatoulaye who is shocked into incomprehension by men's unrestrained exploitation of women questions the former's right to polygamy.

But to understand what?
The supremacy of instinct
The right to betray?
The justification for the desire for variety? (34)

The parallel structures are the noun phrases

VP		NP
	What	
	The supremacy of instinct	
To understand	+	The right to betray
		The justification of the desire for variety

The NPs which are in syntagmatic relationship with the VP "to understand" are paradigmatically associated. They have in common / humiliating /; / selfish / in the human society of the author. The repetition of the noun phrase "what?"would serve the same purpose as the four. It would have depicted the various selfish reasons for polygamous inclination which women vehemently oppose. However, the stylistic significance of the repetition is that it outlines these reasons so as to bring the message that women completely reject the cultural conceptualization of the polygamous nature of man since this is a clear indication of ego-centricism.
With women's determination to transcend the status quo, devotion to marriage is buried by divorce. They consider marriage as an option not a compulsion and loathe polygamy. "Mariama Ba does not give polygamy any chance. Her stance is- polygamy is a bane of marital bliss in the African culture" (Chukwuma, 212). To this, Femi Ojo-Ade (14) adds that polygamy underscores African savagery and men's dehumanization of women. Aissatou, Ramatoulaye's school friend, demonstrates her contempt for polygamy by putting an end to her life with Mawdo Ba who defies her dignity by marring another woman merely to satisfy the wishes of his ageing mother. This boils Aissatou's anger.

Princes master their feelings to fulfill their duties. 'others' bend their
heads and, in silence, accept a destiny that
oppresses them. That, briefly put, is the internal ordering of
our society, with its absurd divisions. I will not yield to it.
I cannot accept what you are offering me today in place of the
happiness we once had. You want to draw a line between
heartfelt love and physical love. I say that there can be no
union of bodies without the hearts acceptance, however, little
that may be. If I can procreate without loving, merely to
stratify the pride of your declining mother, then I find you
despicable. I am stripping myself of your love, your name.

Clothed in my dignity, the only worthy garment, I got my way. (31-32).

For the modern woman, therefore, marriage should be a relationship that is based on equal partnership and love between men and women. If not so, it should be brought to an end.

Conclusion

Feminism generally deals with the theme of female subordination and its attendant invisibility. Women, over the years, have shown a marked resentment of the limitation and circumspection of their traditional roles which included finding mates and thereafter bearing children. Every other thing is secondary: education, a career, material wealth, social alarm. All these are subsumed in marriage and motherhood. The marriage system is not a partnership but unequal alliance where the wife is under pressure to prove her femininity through procreation. So, in traditional Africa, procreation is the prime reason for a union of a man and a woman, and the woman as the vessel, is the core of procreation. Failure of this function is generally thought of as failure of the female, even though it could be traceable to the man. The pressures of procreation on the female do not end with fertility/fecundity but fecundity with the right sex aggregate. She is required to perpetuate her husband's lineage with at least a male heir. With this, children become a woman's asset in the home, her means of recognition and power. (Nnolim, 26).

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Challenges Militating Against Effective Deployment Of Biometric Technology In Electoral Processes In Nigeria

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Abstract
Persistent electoral irregularities, including voter impersonation, ballot box snatching, and vote rigging, have continued to erode the credibility of Nigeria's electoral system, necessitating the adoption of biometric technology as a reform mechanism. However, despite this innovation, concerns persist over the effectiveness of its deployment, prompting the present study. The objective of the study was to investigate the underlying factors inhibiting the successful implementation and optimal use of biometric technology during elections. The study relied wholly on in-depth interviews and secondary data drawn from electoral bodies, observers, and civil society groups, while in-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders. The study was anchored on the Technological Determinism Theory, which posits that technological innovations shape societal development. The findings revealed that although financial investments in biometric systems are relatively adequate, their effectiveness is severely undermined by gaps in human capacity, unreliability of operations, limited device access, and poor data security. Based on these findings, the study recommends that a capacity-building program be instituted to equip electoral officials with the requisite technical skills and operational knowledge needed for effective biometric deployment.
Keywords: Challenges, Biometrics, Elections, Technology, Deployment, Logistics.

Introduction

The introduction of biometric technology into electoral processes has emerged as a major innovation aimed at promoting transparency, enhancing credibility, and eliminating electoral fraud in democracies across the globe. In Nigeria, where the history of elections has been marred by allegations of rigging, voter impersonation, multiple voting, and ballot stuffing, the adoption of biometric systems such as the Smart Card Reader (SCR), Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs), and the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) was a significant step forward. These technologies were introduced by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as part of its reform agenda to sanitize the electoral system and restore public confidence in the democratic process (Ologunagba & Omilusi, 2023). Despite these laudable measures, the Nigerian electoral process still grapples with multifaceted challenges that undermine the effectiveness and reliability of biometric technologies during elections.

Biometric technology, particularly fingerprint and facial recognition tools, was designed to ensure that only duly registered voters could participate in elections. It was expected to substantially reduce or eliminate electoral malpractices by verifying voters' identities with high accuracy, thereby preventing impersonation and ensuring the principle of "one person, one vote" (Ogbuli & Umeh, 2022). INEC has invested significantly in acquiring hardware and software, training personnel, conducting voter education, and deploying systems for voter registration and accreditation. From the 2011 general elections, which marked the official debut of biometric voter registration in Nigeria, to the 2023 elections, INEC has continued to refine and upgrade its biometric systems to keep pace with technological advances and address past shortcomings (Abubakar & Etim, 2024). Nonetheless, the outcomes have not always met public expectations.

While the deployment of biometric technology has yielded positive outcomes in reducing certain forms of electoral malpractice, its implementation has been plagued by technical, infrastructural, administrative, legal, and sociopolitical challenges. For instance, reports from domestic and international observers noted widespread cases of equipment malfunction, poor connectivity, delayed accreditation, and inadequate technical support during elections (Ojo & Adebayo, 2023). These lapses not only undermine the credibility of the elections but also disenfranchise eligible voters and raise questions about the competence of electoral authorities. Additionally, the poor state of infrastructure in rural and remote areas poses serious obstacles to the real-time transmission and verification of biometric data.

Statement of the Problem

The deployment of biometric technology in Nigeria's electoral processes has been fraught with multifaceted challenges that undermine its effectiveness despite its intended objective of promoting electoral integrity. Biometric technology, including fingerprint and facial recognition systems, was introduced to curb electoral fraud, such as multiple registrations and impersonation. However, several operational, technical, infrastructural, and socio-political factors continue to hinder its full potential.

These challenges necessitate scholarly investigation into the systemic and contextual obstacles hampering biometric implementation in Nigerian elections. A clear understanding of these issues is essential for recommending sustainable reforms that can enhance the credibility and reliability of electoral outcomes.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following questions.

i) What measures have been implemented to ensure the effectiveness of biometric technology in Nigeria's elections?
ii) What are the challenges militating against the deployment and effectiveness of biometric technology in Nigeria's election processes?

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to identify and analyze the challenges hindering the effective deployment of biometric technology in Nigeria's election processes and to propose viable solutions to address these issues for improved electoral outcomes. However, the specific objectives include:

i) To evaluate the measures implemented to ensure the effectiveness of biometric technology in Nigerian elections.
ii) To identify the challenges hindering the deployment and effectiveness of biometric technology in Nigeria's election processes.

Conceptual Clarification

This section provides clear definitions essential to the study, offering a foundational understanding that will enhance comprehension of the issues explored, particularly as they relate to the effective implementation of biometric technology in Nigeria's electoral processes.

Electoral Challenges

Electoral challenges refer to the array of obstacles, disputes, and irregularities that hinder the smooth conduct, transparency, fairness, and credibility of elections. These challenges may arise before, during, or after the electoral process and often affect the integrity of democratic governance. According to Olaniyan and Alade (2023), electoral challenges encompass issues such as voter suppression, electoral violence, ballot box snatching, vote buying, logistical failures, and legal disputes over election results. These problems not only threaten democratic participation but also undermine public trust in electoral institutions. Electoral challenges vary in nature and intensity, depending on the political culture, legal framework, and institutional capacity of the country involved.

In Nigeria, for instance, electoral challenges are deeply rooted in systemic problems such as corruption, weak institutions, political desperation, and insecurity. Udo and Ibrahim (2022) argue that electoral challenges in Nigeria often stem from structural inadequacies within the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), including poor voter registration systems, late arrival of electoral materials, malfunctioning biometric devices, and inadequate training of ad hoc staff. These obstacles can result in voter disenfranchisement, manipulation of results, and post-election violence, thereby eroding the legitimacy of the electoral process. Electoral challenges are the systemic, procedural, and socio-political obstacles that undermine the credibility, transparency, and fairness of electoral processes.

Biometrics

Biometrics refers to the scientific methods of identifying and verifying individuals based on their unique physical or behavioral characteristics. These characteristics include fingerprints, facial features, iris patterns, voice, palm prints, and even typing rhythm. In recent years, biometric systems have become increasingly popular due to their ability to provide secure, fast, and reliable identification in various fields, including banking, healthcare, and especially electoral processes (Aliyu & Abubakar, 2023). The use of biometrics removes the burden of remembering passwords or carrying identity cards, instead relying on intrinsic features that are hard to forge or replicate. Biometric authentication systems work by capturing a biometric sample, converting it into a digital format, and comparing it to stored templates to confirm identity (Okoro & Nwachukwu, 2023).

Elections

Elections are a formal and organized process through which individuals in a country, state, or community choose leaders or make decisions on public matters by voting. They are a central pillar of democratic

governance, enabling citizens to express their preferences and hold leaders accountable for their actions. According to Omotola and Adewunmi (2024), elections serve not only as a selection mechanism but also as a tool for political participation, legitimacy, and representation in modern democratic societies. In their simplest form, elections involve the casting of ballots by eligible voters, the counting of votes, and the declaration of winners based on agreed rules, often governed by electoral laws and institutions.

Elections can take different forms such as general elections, by-elections, local government elections, presidential elections, and referenda. Each type plays a unique role in shaping the political leadership and policy direction of a society. In many countries, the process is overseen by an electoral commission or body that ensures transparency, fairness, and adherence to democratic principles. As Omodia and Ibrahim (2023) note, the integrity of elections is crucial to democratic consolidation, as flawed electoral processes can lead to political instability, violence, and loss of public trust. Transparent and credible elections help to legitimize governmental authority, while fraudulent or manipulated ones undermine the democratic process. From a personal viewpoint, elections are the organized way people choose their leaders or policies through voting in a free and fair manner.

Technology

Technology can be defined as the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes, especially in industry, communication, health, education, transportation, and everyday life. It involves the use of tools, machines, systems, and methods to solve problems, improve human life, and enhance productivity. As noted by Adeola and Nwosu (2023), technology encompasses not only physical devices like computers, smartphones, or machines but also includes software, digital platforms, artificial intelligence, and innovative methods that facilitate efficiency and speed in human activities. Today, technology permeates all sectors, transforming how people communicate, work, learn, and interact with their environment.

Contemporary scholars like Yusuf and Adebayo (2024) emphasize that technology has moved beyond mechanical inventions to include digital innovations and artificial intelligence systems, making it more integrated into the global economic, educational, and governance structures. The internet, for instance, is a revolutionary technology that has collapsed geographical boundaries, enabling real-time communication and global access to information. Similarly, blockchain and cloud computing are changing the way data is stored, shared, and managed, offering new levels of security and decentralization (Onyema & Ibrahim, 2024).

Measures implemented for effective Biometric Technology in Election Processes

Okoro and Salihu (2023) examine the implementation of biometric verification systems in Nigeria, specifically the use of Smart Card Readers (SCRs) and the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS). In their article titled *"Biometric Verification and Electoral Integrity in Nigeria: A Case Study of the 2019 and 2023 General Elections"*, they adopt the Technological Determinism Theory, which emphasizes the impact of technological innovation on societal structures and political processes. Using a mixed-method approach, including survey data from 400 respondents across six geopolitical zones and content analysis of INEC reports, the authors found that biometric verification reduced instances of multiple voting and voter impersonation. They recommend the expansion of voter education campaigns to enhance the effective use of biometric tools. However, the study did not delve into the procedural implementation and logistical arrangements, such as infrastructure deployment and staff training, which are crucial to the effective use of biometric technology. The present study fills this gap by evaluating the preparatory and operational measures adopted in Nigeria, such as INEC's biometric training manuals for ad-hoc staff, the stepwise accreditation guidelines, and real-time troubleshooting mechanisms during elections.

Eze and Hassan (2023) investigate biometric innovations and voter confidence in their article titled *"Technology, Trust, and Electoral Credibility: Biometric Voting Systems in Nigeria"*. The authors employ the Sociotechnical Systems Theory, which argues that technology must align with social systems and user environments to be effective. Their survey-based methodology captured responses from 500 registered voters in Lagos, Kano, Rivers, and Enugu States. The findings indicate a strong correlation between the perceived accuracy of biometric verification and voter trust in election outcomes. They recommend the simplification of biometric interfaces to improve usability among rural and elderly populations. However, the study did not comprehensively examine stakeholder involvement in planning and implementing biometric systems, particularly the role of political parties, NGOs, and community leaders. The present study fills this vacuum by examining how INEC involved stakeholders in the development and deployment of BVAS technology through consultative forums and trial simulations conducted ahead of the 2023 elections. This inclusive approach played a critical role in public acceptance and the relatively peaceful conduct of elections.

Challenges Militating against the Effective Deployment of Biometric Technology in Election Processes

Salihu (2024) examines the Barriers to Biometric Electoral Technology in Fragile Democracies: A Nigerian Perspective. The study employed the Institutional Capacity Theory to understand how the institutional weaknesses of Nigeria's electoral commission affect the deployment of biometric systems. He utilized descriptive statistics from field surveys conducted across six geopolitical zones involving 600 respondents. His findings indicate that apart from technical failures, poor voter education and resistance to new technology among local communities significantly undermine biometric deployment. He recommended massive civic education programs and an overhaul of electoral training systems to bridge the knowledge gap. While the study explores the institutional inefficiencies of INEC and citizen illiteracy as critical barriers, he fails to unpack the politicization of procurement contracts for biometric devices and the lack of legal frameworks to prosecute vendors for delivering substandard technologies, both of which are crucial gaps addressed in the current research.

Okoro (2023), in his work titled *"Technological Disparities and the Problem of Biometric Voting in Nigeria",* employed the Socio-Technical Systems Theory to explain how the failure to synchronize technological infrastructure with the social and administrative components of the electoral body has led to dysfunctional deployment of biometric systems. Using a mixed-method approach involving structured interviews with INEC officials and analysis of voter accreditation reports, the author found that irregular power supply, faulty biometric verification devices, and poor internet connectivity hampered the successful deployment of the technology during elections. He recommended that Nigeria should prioritize infrastructural investment and regular technical audits before elections. While the author explores the operational limitations of biometric technology in rural and peri-urban areas but failed to interrogate the systemic administrative sabotage, including internal manipulations of electoral officials and inadequate logistics during elections, which the present study focuses on.

Ibrahim (2023), in his study *"Biometric Voting and the Trust Deficit in Nigeria's Electoral System,"* adopts the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to assess how public perception and trust influence the efficacy of biometric technology in elections. Through survey methodology involving 1,000 registered voters in Lagos, Kano, and Rivers States, Ibrahim discovered that voters often lose trust in the biometric process due to inconsistencies in facial and fingerprint recognition and the frequent device breakdown during peak election periods. His recommendation included reengineering the biometric system to incorporate redundancy measures and training polling officers in rapid response troubleshooting. However, the author largely focused on the perceptual and trust-related aspects of voters and did not provide empirical insight into the legal and bureaucratic lapses that weaken the deployment process, such as noncompliance with procurement guidelines, absence of post-election biometric audits, and poor inter-agency coordination, all of which are thoroughly examined in the current study.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on Technological Determinism Theory as its appropriate tool of analysis. The theory was popularized by Thorstein Veblen in 1921 and later advanced by scholars such as Karl Marx and Marshall McLuhan. Veblen first suggested that technology is the primary force shaping societal change, a view echoed by McLuhan in the 1960s, who famously asserted that "the medium is the message" to emphasize the role of technological forms in transforming culture (McLuhan, 1964). The theory's basic assumption is that technological innovation drives the development of social structures, cultural values, and historical progress. It posits that technological change is autonomous and precedes social change; thus, society reorganizes itself in response to new technological imperatives (Smith & Marx, 1994). According to Chandler (1995), technological determinism assumes a unidirectional relationship between technology and society, meaning technology shapes society, but society has minimal influence over technology's evolution.

The theory suggests that technological advancement determines the direction of human behavior and societal norms, often reducing human agency in the process (Misa, 2004). Critics argue that this view overlooks the role of human intention, cultural context, and institutional influences in shaping technology (Bijker, 1997). Nevertheless, the theory remains a foundational lens for examining the interplay between technology and society, especially in the digital age where innovations such as artificial intelligence, social media, and automation rapidly reshape human interaction and governance (Winner, 1986). Despite its limitations, Technological Determinism continues to provoke debate over whether society is a passive recipient or an active shaper of technology.

This theory is relevant to examining the challenges facing the effective deployment of biometric technology in Nigeria's elections because it focuses on how technology should ideally drive societal transformation. Biometric technology—like fingerprint and facial recognition systems—is expected to eliminate electoral fraud, enhance

transparency, and increase public trust in the process. However, in Nigeria, this transformative potential is undermined by non-technological factors. For example, low digital literacy remains a major barrier, with only about 38% of Nigerians having basic ICT skills as of 2023 (ITU, 2023).

Methodology

This study employs a mixed-method research approach to explore the obstacles hindering the effective implementation of biometric technology in Nigeria's electoral processes. It integrates both quantitative and qualitative data to ensure a well-rounded understanding of the subject matter. The target population comprised of individuals drawn from core institutions engaged in electoral activities in Nigeria, including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), Election Observers, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the Nigerian Police Force, and the National Orientation Agency (NOA).

In an interview with the Program Manager for Elections at the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) on April 18th, 2025, he explained that:

> Several strategic steps have been taken to strengthen the use of biometric technology in Nigeria's elections. According to him, CDD has worked closely with electoral bodies and civil society groups to ensure voter education and awareness on how biometric systems operate. He also noted that training for polling officers and increased transparency in the technology's deployment have helped reduce manipulation. He stressed that trust-building and constant monitoring remain essential in ensuring the system's success.

During a discussion with the National Commissioner for ICT and Innovation at the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on April 17th, 2025, he outlined that:

> INEC has adopted advanced biometric tools like the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and upgraded its digital servers for real-time data verification. He emphasized the importance of continuous technical training for INEC staff and improved coordination with security agencies to protect [the] biometric infrastructure. The Commissioner also mentioned periodic system audits and simulations conducted before elections to detect and fix possible glitches, ensuring better reliability during actual polls.

In a conversation held on April 17th, 2025, with the Director of Operations at the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), he highlighted that:

> One of the key measures has been the integration of the National Identification Number (NIN) with voter registration. He explained that this linkage helps to eliminate double registration and strengthens the authenticity of voter identities. He added that the Commission has collaborated with INEC to supply biometric data for pre-election verification and post-election analysis. According to him, regular system upgrades and a centralized database are used to improve the accuracy of identity validation processes.

Speaking on April 18th, 2025, with the Director of Public Enlightenment at the National Orientation Agency (NOA), she stated that:

> The agency has focused on raising public awareness about biometric technology through radio programs, town hall meetings, and local campaigns. She said that many Nigerians were initially skeptical, but continuous education has increased acceptance and reduced fears of data misuse. The Director mentioned that the NOA collaborates with community leaders and traditional institutions to explain how biometrics help ensure credible elections. She concluded that information accessibility and public trust are vital to the technology's effectiveness.

However, data from the secondary sources show that since Nigeria began biometric integration in 2011 with Biometric Voter Registration (BVR), the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has continually strengthened protocols to bolster election credibility. In the initial BVR conducted across 120,000 polling units in just three weeks (January–February 2011), INEC captured fingerprints and facial features, eliminating nearly one million multiple registrations through the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) by March 2011. By 2015, AFIS, rated approximately 95 per cent accurate, was complemented with manual checks to validate and refine the voters' register, making it "the cleanest register ever used in elections in Nigeria" (Ogbadebo, 2025).

To further guard against duplicate voting, the Permanent Voter Card (PVC) was introduced. Each PVC contained the voter's biometric data encoded onto a chip. The Smart Card Reader (SCR), deployed in 2015, authenticated voters via PVC chip reading and fingerprint matching at polling units, which curtailed double voting substantially (Ogbadebo, 2025). Despite initial teething problems, rejected fingerprints on SCR, high failure rates during the presidential and National Assembly polls, INEC rapidly adapted, reducing malfunctions and doubling efficiency by the governorship elections (Amaechi & Gerald, 2021).

INEC has complemented technological deployments with rigorous non-technological measures: comprehensive training of over 176,000 presiding officers, assistant presiding officers, and technical support staff nationwide;

mock accreditation drills in every senatorial district; and stakeholder consultation with political parties, civil society groups, and observers to build transparency and trust. The legal backbone was also reinforced: the Electoral Act 2022 offered statutory support for technology use, though BVAS is not explicitly mentioned.

INEC has proactively addressed infrastructure vulnerabilities. Recognizing Nigeria's lagging broadband penetration (median download ~21.5 Mbps, ~61 per cent rural unconnected), the commission instituted backup BVAS devices, power generators, contingency plans (paper ACUs, incident forms), and parallel manual accreditation to ensure no disenfranchisement. Following the 2023 glitches in result transmission via IReV, INEC has promised investment in connectivity and forensic training for staff (Amaechi & Gerald, 2021).

Empirical data affirms biometric technology's effectiveness: multiple registration was drastically reduced (1 million in 2011, 2.8 million in 2022), BVAS accreditation levels improved from underperforming SCR to 98 per cent success, and election transparency increased through real-time result uploads from over 176,000 polling units. Observers have acknowledged fewer inflated voter counts and recognized BVAS as a "game-changer" for election credibility (Ogbadebo, 2025).

Yet challenges remain: facial recognition struggles with ageing voters, fingerprint rejections among seniors, uneven internet coverage, delayed accreditation, and limited local tech capacity. Scholars stress that technical fixes must be accompanied by transparency, stakeholder engagement, feasibility studies, and continuous capacity building to avoid undermining credibility.

In an interview with the Programme Manager for Elections at the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) on April 18th, 2025, the officer explained that a major challenge affecting biometric technology in Nigeria's elections is political interference. He said:

> Politicians often manipulate systems or resist reforms that threaten their influence. He also mentioned inadequate technical training for electoral staff and poor maintenance of biometric equipment. Furthermore, he highlighted that internet connectivity and power supply issues especially in rural areas greatly disrupt verification processes. According to him, unless the government ensures independence of institutions and invests in infrastructure, biometric deployment will remain flawed.

During a discussion with the National Commissioner for ICT and Innovation at the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on April 17th, 2025, the Commissioner stressed that:

> Funding constraints are a key problem. He revealed that acquiring and maintaining advanced biometric systems requires steady financial support, which is often delayed or insufficient. He also pointed to logistical issues such as late delivery of materials and low-skilled temporary staff during elections. He added that security threats in conflict-prone areas prevent the effective use of biometric tools. He concluded by saying that improving staff training and consistent budgeting would enhance the system's reliability.

In a conversation with the Director of Operations at the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) on April 17th, 2025, the officer explained that:

> The fragmentation of identity databases is a big setback. The lack of integration between NIMC and INEC systems causes duplication and mismatch of voter data, weakening biometric reliability. Insufficient enrollment centres limit many citizens from registering biometrics. That officer highlighted weak public awareness and digital literacy as another concern. He emphasized the need for better data sharing among institutions and public education to ensure the success of biometric election processes.

Speaking with the Director of Public Enlightenment at the National Orientation Agency (NOA) on April 18th, 2025, the officer identified low voter awareness and public mistrust as key challenges. He noted that:

> Many citizens do not fully understand how biometric technology works, leading to fear and suspicion during elections. He also mentioned that misinformation spreads easily, especially in rural communities, and affects confidence in the process. According to him, the government must improve voter education and community engagement to ensure smoother acceptance of biometric systems. He concluded by saying that consistent awareness campaigns will build trust in the electoral process.

Discussion of Findings

The first objective of this study seeks to investigate the measures implemented to ensure the effectiveness of biometric technology in Nigerian elections. Findings from respondents indicate that although a significant portion agree that the government allocates sufficient funding towards enhancing biometric technology, the effectiveness of such investments is undermined by key operational weaknesses. Specifically, inadequacies in human capacity development, inconsistent device functionality, limited accessibility to biometric equipment in rural areas, and growing concerns over data security threaten the intended impact of these technologies. This contradicts the findings of Okoro and Salihu (2023), who asserted that biometric verification systems had substantially curtailed multiple voting and voter impersonation in recent elections. Their study emphasized that technology, once deployed, and would independently drive credibility in the electoral process. However, the present study reveals that without robust training for electoral staff, secure and well-maintained devices, and

widespread deployment, the technology alone cannot guarantee transparency. This finding aligns with the assumptions of Technological Determinism Theory, which posits that technology has the power to transform societies, but in Nigeria's case, that power is obstructed by social and institutional weaknesses. The expectation that technology will automatically improve electoral credibility is not realized because the supporting structures and human elements required to sustain such a transformation are grossly inadequate.

The second major finding addresses the challenges hindering the deployment and effectiveness of biometric technology in Nigeria's election processes. The data demonstrates that while biometric technology holds strong potential to curb electoral fraud, its deployment is obstructed by political interference, administrative inefficiencies, legal ambiguities, and infrastructural limitations. Respondents overwhelmingly highlighted instances where political actors manipulate the electoral process, such as tampering with biometric voter accreditation devices or deliberately delaying logistics to serve partisan interests. These observations are consistent with the study by Nwachukwu (2022), who documented how electoral stakeholders, particularly political elites, exploit the vulnerabilities within biometric systems for personal or party gain. Nwachukwu's findings reinforce the notion that technology alone cannot sanitize elections if the political environment remains compromised. This scenario further validates the relevance of Technological Determinism Theory to this study. Although the theory holds that technological innovations can drive societal change, the Nigerian context shows that societal and political resistance dilutes the intended effect of biometric technologies. Thus, without addressing the political will and institutional readiness, the transformative power of biometric election technologies remains suppressed, limiting their effectiveness in creating credible and transparent electoral outcomes.

Conclusion

This study on the *challenges militating against the effective deployment of biometric technology in election processes in Nigeria* reveals critical factors that undermine the full potential of this innovation despite its promise to enhance electoral integrity. While the government appears to provide reasonable financial support, the effectiveness of biometric systems is severely hindered by persistent corruption, political interference, infrastructural deficiencies, and low digital literacy among both officials and the electorate. The findings further indicate that although biometric technology is capable of reducing electoral fraud and increasing transparency, its deployment in Nigeria has not achieved desired outcomes due to weak institutional frameworks and insufficient technical expertise. Moreover, the absence of consistent training and public awareness campaigns continues to limit acceptance and understanding of biometric tools. These challenges reflect broader systemic issues that impede technological reforms in Nigeria's electoral processes. Thus, for biometric technology to serve as a reliable tool for credible elections, Nigeria must address the foundational gaps in governance, infrastructure, and human capacity. This study reinforces the relevance of Technological Determinism Theory by showing how non-technological variables can suppress the transformative potential of innovations. Ultimately, the effective deployment of biometric systems in Nigeria demands a holistic, transparent, and sustained reform approach backed by strong political will.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to address the challenges militating against the effective deployment of biometric technology in Nigeria's election processes.

1. First, while financial support appears adequate, targeted investment must be redirected towards human capacity development and technical training for electoral officers, ICT personnel, and field operators. This should include continuous training on the use and maintenance of biometric devices, data management, and emergency response procedures to improve operational reliability and device handling efficiency. This will ensure that the financial input translates into real electoral value through enhanced competence and system functionality.
2. Second, to overcome political, legal, and infrastructural bottlenecks, the Nigerian government should initiate a multi-stakeholder electoral reform that mandates a legal framework for biometric technology use, strengthens the institutional independence of INEC, and provides enforceable sanctions against political interference. Additionally, infrastructure such as steady electricity, reliable internet connectivity, and secure data centers must be prioritized, particularly in rural areas, to ensure equitable accessibility and real-time data transmission. These systemic reforms will create an enabling environment for biometric technology to operate effectively, thereby enhancing the integrity, transparency, and credibility of Nigeria's election processes.

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Asaba Massacre: Politics Of Memorialising And Commemorating The Nigeria-Biafra War

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Abstract
The Asaba Massacre was a horrendous incident during the Nigeria-Biafra War (1967–1970), which the Nigerian government would prefer to forget, but not the Asaba people. This study focused on one of the areas that witnessed wartime violence (Asaba) and how survivors preserve this memory with the hope of reclaiming this past in the face of a silenced national history. It revealed a state-centric effort to obliterate dark memories and regional attempts to challenge the official narrative. Raising concern about a new dimension of neocolonialism, that of memory and its impact on remembrance and commemoration in postcolonial communities, this essay provided a historical analysis of Nigeria's postwar political leadership and how power is used to control narrative and manipulate the truth. Utilizing Foucault's theory on power as inevitably defining truth and Hall's encoding and decoding theory, this essay explored how the Nigerian ruling class, who prosecuted the war, determined the national narrative and discourse.
Keywords: Asaba Massacre, Nigeria-Biafra War, Igbo, Collective Memory and Commemoration, Neo-colonialism

Introduction

Admission of guilt does not necessarily absolve the offender, but it may at least shorten the recital and reliving of painful evidence.
—Chinua Achebe
[1]

Nations are ultimately built on stories.
—Yuval Noah Harari[2]

On October 7, 1967, federal troops under the command of future Nigerian military leader Murtala Muhammed killed between 500 and 800 men in Asaba. Asaba is an ethnic Igbo town with five quarters in today's south-south Nigeria.[3] In Ogbe-Osowa, one of the five village squares, men, women, and children gathered at the behest of their leaders to show their support for "One Nigeria" during the secessionist Nigeria-Biafra war (1967–1971). Encouraged, they wore *akwa ocha*, ceremonial white embroidered clothing that signifies peace, and chanted the Federal mantra of "One Nigeria" in unison in the hope of ending all violence against them by the troops. By October 5, 1967, Federal troops had advanced into Asaba, and between October 6 and 7, they had settled in the town after their successful counter-attack against the advancing Biafran forces, unfortunately at a deadly cost to the Asaba population. Some of the soldiers began killing boys and men, accusing them of being Biafran sympathizers, and at Ogbe-Osowa, they were separated from the women and gunned down.[4] Throughout the Midwest occupation by the federal troops, none suffered more than the Asaba people, with cases of female casualties, rape, molestation, and extortion. Other massacre sites in Asaba include the High Court, police station, and football field. This created a sense of fear and anxiety that still hangs over Asaba.

Decades after the war ended with Biafra's capitulation on January 15, 1970, official attempts to ensure the dis-remembrance and de-memorialization of Biafra and the Asaba massacre, in particular, have remained strong. Despite official reconstruction being premised on the policy of "reintegration, reconciliation and rehabilitation", popularly known as the 3Rs, the government has pragmatically pursued a policy of forgetting a past of violence and injustice, such as the Nigeria-Biafra war and the atrocities of the Asaba massacre. However, among the Igbo of defunct Biafra, who continue to feel marginalized in contemporary Nigeria, there is a growing political resurgence agitating for Biafra.[5] Among the Asaba people, which is the focus of this essay, are

[1] Chinua Achebe, *The Education of a British-Protected Child* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2009), 9.
[2] Yuval Noah Harari, "Why Vladimir Putin has already lost this war" *The Guardian*, last accessed March 5, 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/feb/28/vladimir-putin-war-russia-ukraine
[3] Asaba town is located on the west bank of the River Niger, and hence its people have been described as the "Igbo west of the Niger." Onitsha is its closest Igbo town, on the east bank of the Niger River. The two communities are linked by the Niger Bridge.
[4] S. Elizabeth Bird and Fraser M. Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre: Trauma, Memory, and the Nigerian Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
[5] On Biafran resurgence, see: Godwin Onuoha, "Memory, Reconciliation, Peacebuilding in Post-Civil War Southeastern Nigeria" *APN Working Papers*, no 19 (June 2018), 1-37

community councils and unions, families, individuals, and a variety of religious and grassroots organizations that are reclaiming the history of the Asaba massacre. They challenge the national policy of forgetting through their practices of collective memory and commemoration. Their efforts at commemoration from the margins embody and occur through space and in talk, as Irina Carlota Silber points out.[6] This essay examines the tension between remembering and forgetting in everyday life.

This study asserts that the Asaba massacre is a salient but neglected theme in contemporary Nigerian history and commemorative discourse. It examines the interaction between the projected national narrative and state power, and through a bottom-up approach, it uses "regional narrative" to challenge the official truth. Confronting Nigeria's most profound contradictions, it examines efforts by Asabans to commemorate the Asaba Massacre through the installation of family plaques, the erection of a monument, and the establishment of an Asaba Massacre Foundation, hosting annual memorials, radio and TV broadcasts, and publication in national daily newspapers that educate and stimulate conversations about the incident. The postwar official policy to erase memories of the Nigeria-Biafra war and many atrocities, even in Asaba, negatively impacts transitional justice. State efforts to honor war leaders via the naming of public spaces and the appropriation of their image and name on banknotes are a manipulation of the past. This appropriates hero status to them, and hence they do not need to stand trial for war crimes, as some have clamored. Media censorship of conversations and discourse on Biafra and the Asaba Massacre aims to obliterate the truth and garner support for the state's grand narrative. Utilizing Michel Foucault's theory on power as inevitably defining truth and Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding theory, this essay explores how the Nigerian ruling class, who had prosecuted the war, determined the national narrative and discourse.

To develop this analysis of the politics of memory and commemoration, first, a brief discussion on the road to the Nigeria-Biafra war and the Asaba massacre is provided. Next, the official 3Rs policy at the war's end and other efforts predicated on conciliation is examined. Then, the study examines the wartime violence in Asaba and how survivors preserve this memory, with a focus on this regional response toward reclaiming the history of the massacre. Specifically, a historical analysis of postwar political leadership in Nigeria and how power is used to control the narrative is undertaken. The analysis of the relationship between power, the grand narrative, and the Asaba commemoration illustrates the contextually defined struggle between remembering and forgetting. This relationship between two historically oppositional sides to the past conflict—the Nigerian government and the Asaba community—demonstrates what Silber describes as "*visceral remembering*."[7]

The Nigeria-Biafra War, 1960-1970

On May 30, 1967, Lt.-Col. Ojukwu, the military governor of Eastern Nigeria, announced the region's secession from Nigeria. He christened the newly created area the Republic of Biafra. By July 6, 1967, following a partial military operation by the Nigerian Army dubbed a "police action," the competing groups had descended into a 30-month-long war. The Nigeria-Biafra war was an ethnic conflict driven by two of Nigeria's three largest sociocultural and linguistic groups—the Igbo-dominated Eastern Nigeria and the Hausa-Fulani-led Federal Military Government of Nigeria (FMG). However, the war was the result of deep-seated and age-old tensions between these two groups.

The immediate cause, however, was the military coup of January 15, 1966, which was supposedly led by idealistic junior officers, mostly of Igbo descent, and resulted in the assassination of several prominent politicians, including Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa and the Premier of the Northern Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello, both Hausa men. The situation deteriorated further, and on July 29, 1966, a counter-coup led by Northern officers ended the FMG of Major-General JTU Aguiyi-Ironsi, an Igbo man. Unfortunately, following this was the pogrom—a resurgence of anti-Igbo violence in northern Nigeria that resulted in the deaths of about 30,000 Igbo people. This eventually led to the mass exodus of about a million Igbo people to their ancestral home in eastern Nigeria, culminating in the war.

By August 9, 1967, Biafran forces had advanced along the Niger River into Asaba and about 120 kilometers farther into Benin, the capital of the Midwest region. Lt. Col. Murtala Muhammed commanded the newly formed 2nd Division of the Nigerian Army to repel the Biafran forces. As Biafran troops withdrew and Nigerian troops advanced, Igbo elites in the Midwest fled. Many Asaba residents fled home, spreading fear of the violent rampage, which was carried out by their Midwestern non-Igbo neighbors. Murtala Muhammed, however, did not relieve civilian rage or anti-Igbo sentiment. Instead, he appointed a temporary administrator and issued a warning:

[6] Irina Carlota Silber, "Commemorating the Past in Postwar El Salvador," in *Memory and the Impact of Political Transformation in Public Space*, edited by Daniel J. Walkowitz and Lisa Maya Knauer (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2004), 211–232.
[7] Silber, "Commemorating the Past" 212.

> I would like to advise all innocent citizens…to keep out of our way of the federal troops...anybody that stands in the way of the federal troops will be regarded and treated as a rebel...I would like to appeal to all my brothers and sisters in the Midwestern State of Nigeria to assist the federal troops in locating, and in the eventual destruction of the rebels that may be hiding around the Midwest.[8]

"Whether he intended it or not," Bird and Ottanelli observe, "this call was consistent with an approach that characterized events from then on—that any Igbo-speaker was assumed to be a sympathizer or saboteur and could be legitimately targeted." Non-Igbo in the Midwest attacked their Igbo neighbors, who stayed back in Benin and Warri. The *New York Times* writer Alfred Friendly reported the killing of 400–500 people by "civilian mobs," mostly poorer people.[9] Despite the people's collection of gifts to appease the federal troops, the indiscriminate killings continued. While the death toll is unknown, Bird and Ottanelli conclude that during Murtala's "liberation, perhaps 8,000 I[g]bo [Midwest] civilians died." Unfortunately, Asaba had the highest number of casualties.[10] By October 5, as Biafran troops retreated to the border town of Onitsha, they blew up the eastern Onitsha part of the Niger Bridge to halt federal advancement, a situation that would have disastrous consequences for Asaba.[11]

The Asaba Massacre

October 1967 would remain a dreadful month for the Asaba people, typically "the most vulnerable Nigerians" as Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka described them.[12] It was the month federal "troops entered Asaba in pursuit of the retreating Biafran army, slaughtering thousands of civilians and leaving the town in ruins."[13] By October 4, federal troops had reached the outskirts of Asaba, and by October 5, Asaba recorded its first casualties of the war from "ferocious" shelling from offensive Nigerian forces. According to a Nigerian newspaper, "the Capture of Asaba [on October 5] completed the liberation of the Midwest State."[14] Following Gowon's orders to consolidate the victory in the Midwest, Murtala was "in a hurry to get the job done."[15] By the afternoon of October 5, federal troops had properly entered Asaba, and the occupation began.

Col. Osa Ogbebor, whose Eight Brigade troops were among the first to enter Asaba, explained that there was a plan to evacuate civilians from the town to clear out Biafran soldiers. A survivor, Ify Uraih, recounts that they met the trucks full, but they never returned to pick them up or the other families the federal troops had assembled. Instead, "they camped us there for the night of the fourth, the fifth of October, and they were very nice. They gave us food, and they said to us, 'Look, the federal troops don't harm people like that. If they wanted to kill us, they would have killed us.' So, we were all totally relaxed."[16]

Sadly, the evacuation plan fell apart. Soldiers began going from house to house, extorting money, looting, and "rounding up boys and men accused of being Biafran sympathizers or, if they showed signs of having worm boots, of actually being Biafran soldiers." They were shot on the spot or forcibly herded in groups to be killed elsewhere. Bird and Ottanelli in *The Asaba Massacre* share vivid survivors' accounts of the brutality carried out against individuals and groups, and how they experienced harassment, humiliation, extortion, and indiscriminate killings in this horrific period. According to them, "Several hundred people were executed in groups all over town. Males who had been singled out were either shot on the spot or taken to the police station, the High Court on Okpanam Road, the soccer field, or the riverbank, where they were executed. Witnesses remembered seeing the streets littered with corpses."[17] Survivors, like Akunwata Sylvester O. Okocha, a senior civil servant, recount how he was able to escape the targeted execution of Igbo speakers who held appointments in the Midwest government in Benin City because he had seen his name on the prepared list. Others were unfortunate. On the streets, the soldiers stopped and gathered men. Patience Chukwura recounts her family's sad ordeal on October 6:

> My husband and brother, and all those, about 400 people who were following them, they were shot in front of the police station at Asaba. That made me hysterical… I held onto the person I saw, the soldier, I said, "Why did you kill my husband?" … The man with the butt of his gun hit me in the chest and said, "Woman, if you're not careful, you'll get killed as well." … Papa—that's my father-in-law—when he heard that his two sons were killed, he went out… They shot him. They killed him… We were in fear that they were going to wipe out everybody in Asaba, especially male children.[18]

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[8] AHM Kirk-Greene, *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria: A Documentary Sourcebook vol. 2* (Oxford University Press, 1971), 162.
[9] Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre*, 19-20; John de St. Jorre, *The Nigerian Civil War* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972), 163.
[10] John de St. Jorre, *The Nigerian*, 162-163; Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre* 19.
[11] Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre* 19-20.
[12] Wole Soyinka, *The Man Died: Prison Notes* (London: Rex Collings, 1972), 75
[13] Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre* i.
[14] "War diary"
[15] Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre* 32-33, 35.
[16] Oral interview with Ify Uraih, October 9, 2009, Tampa, FL. in Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre* 36.
[17] Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre*, 36, 37, 39.
[18] Oral interview with Patience Chukwura, December 10, 2009, Lagos in Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre* 40.

When Emmanuel Chukwura, her brother-in-law, returned, he had lost both parents and four brothers (Eddie, Christian, Dennis and Samson).[19] These killings were not isolated incidents, nor were they carried out in isolation.

Before the October 7 massacre, on the evening of October 6, the *Asagba-in-Council*, Asaba's traditional gerontocratic government, along with other senior leaders, met to seek ways to convince the federal forces of their disassociation from Biafra's secession and welcome them. The town's leaders agreed and ordered the town criers to summon the whole community to assemble the next day, wearing *akwa ocha*, the traditional ceremonial white apparel that signifies peace, to welcome the federal troops and pledge to "One Nigeria." Traditionally, this processional dance was performed at special events. Some others who fled into the bush or camped on the outskirts of town at St. Patrick's College, Asaba, came back. A survivor and professor of economics, Pat Utomi, recalls that he took refuge at the College.[20]

Up to 4000 townspeople participated as community elders led the way. Despite mothers attempting to protect their young and wives protecting their husbands, the men and boys were guided by soldiers into the open area. Christopher Mkpayah, a survivor, recounts that:

> When we got there, they said we should now stop… As we stopped there, they now surrounded us, sat us all down, and they started whipping us… The next thing we saw, the officers...spoke in Hausa. I was born in the North, so I heard what he said… He said they should take us 10 by 10 and start firing us. I said, we are finished. Some people said they are just trying to threaten us… That officer now picked out somebody from our midst, shot him, picked out another person, shot him...then people began praying, "Father, forgive them, they don't know what they did."[21]

Another witness recounts that they started killing by lining up twenty men. Bird and Ottanelli add that the soldiers switched to their machine guns mounted in trucks as soon as they were tired of killing with rifles. Ify Uraih, then 15 years old, joined the parade with his father and three brothers—Paul, Emmanuel and Medua—who were all killed.[22] Unlike Ify Uraih, who lay still under the heap of corpses for a long time until he felt safe to escape with his cousin into the nearby bush, another survivor, Iloemechina Amuwah, the Obi Obajama of Asaba, recounts that after escaping, he was recaptured and taken to another killing site at the CMS field. Fortunately, he was rescued by his old college classmate, Babs Ali (a senior officer), who arrived in a military van.[23]

For young Joseph Nwajie, escaping into the bush after witnessing the death of his uncle George saved him, but not his two brothers, aged 12 and 17, who died in the mass shooting. It is unclear how many people died in this single incident because no precise number of casualties has been established. Bird and Ottanelli cite multiple sources with varying numbers, including the Asaba Development Council (ADC), which compiled a list of 373 names. From eyewitness accounts, they deduced that many who lost their lives were excluded from this list and concluded that it seems likely that 700–800 people were killed.[24] By the end of October 7, an estimated 2000 people had been killed, according to the *Investigators' Report on a Complaint Laid Before the Directorate of the International Commission for the Study of the Crime of Genocide* submitted in 1969.[25] Many lay unburied for many days—a heavy burden for women and the Red Cross. Some victims were buried in their family compounds, but most were dumped in mass graves, sometimes shallow graves, and others were dumped into the Niger River.

The targeted killings of men did not reduce women to mere spectators of this horror. As they mourned, they were left with the responsibility of burying their dead husbands, children, brothers, and fathers-in-law in the family compound. They would search through piles of corpses for their dead or on the streets, and when found, "some dragged two days before they reached home" for burial, as a survivor, Esther Nwanze recounts.[26] In addition, women not only resisted the indiscriminate killing but were also murdered for their resistance. To exemplify this, Bird and Ottanelli share the story of the death of Rose Ezinunor Mordi, a 27-year-old trained

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[19] Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre* 40.

[20] Pat Utomi, "Prof. Ernest Emenyonu in conversation with Prof. Pat Utomi ' 50 years - Legacies of Biafra'," at the 6th Annual International Igbo Conference Themed "Legacies of Biafra" *Igbo Conference*, video, 31 July, 2017 - 05:33, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmHksCLZFD4&t=589s

[21] Oral interview with Christopher Mkpayah, December 10, 2009, by S. Elizabeth Bird and Fraser M. Ottanelli (Asaba Memorial Oral History Project, Oral History Program, Florida Studies Center, University of South Florida, Tampa Library).

[22] For more witness accounts of the Asaba occupation, see Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre* 21-147.

[23] Iloemechina Amuwah, "Biafra at 50: 'Anyị chere na anyị bịara ịnabata ndị enyi, anyị amaghị na ọ bụ ọnwụ ka anyị na-agakwu' - Onye hụrụ 'Asaba Massacre' [Biafra at 50: 'We thought we were coming to welcome friends, we didn't know we were going to die' - 'Asaba Massacre' Witness/Survivor]," *BBC News Igbo*, video, 17 January, 2020 - 00:01-02:40, https://www.bbc.com/igbo/afirika-51132423

[24] Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre* 48-49.

[25] *Investigators' Report on a Complaint Laid Before the Directorate of the International Commission for the Study of the Crime of Genocide* (1969), accessed at the University of Oxford, Rhodes House, Mss Afr.s 2399 in Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre* 49.

[26] Oral interview with Esther Nwanze, October 7, 2011, Lagos, in Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre* 47.

nurse who was killed on the spot for intervening against soldier brutality and harassment.[27] Egodi Uchendu's *Women and Conflict in the Nigerian Civil War* draws on interviews with women who survived the war to narrate the significant roles and experiences of women during the days of the occupation.[28]

Federal troops remained in Asaba and made several attempts to enter Onitsha, even by boat on October 20. Regarded by Major Alexander Madiebo as the "Second Invasion of Onitsha," the Nigerian Amanda, with approximately 10 boats, was sunk by a Biafran-made rocket, the *Ogbunigwe*. After the defeat of federal forces on the west bank of the River Niger in Asaba, Col. Murtala reorganized to attack Onitsha from Nsukka, in the north, in December 1967.[29] After months of battle, the capture of Owerri, Biafra's administrative headquarters, on January 12, 1970, would lead to Biafra's surrender three days later.[30]

The Politics of Remembering and Forgetting

In the national broadcast of January 15, 1970, titled "Dawn of National Reconciliation," General Gowon set forth the policy of national reconciliation for postwar Nigeria. The address was crafted and premised on forgetting Biafra, the war, and massacres like the Asaba massacre.[31] Gowon's "no victor, no vanquished" rhetoric was to enable healing within the purview of Igbo "reintegration, reconciliation, and reconstruction" (the 3Rs); however, it lacked official reflection on the war. It produced state denials because it was a war the Nigerian state would prefer to forget and not revisit. Gowon vowed, "never to return to the fractious, sterile, and selfish debates that led to the tragic conflict just ending." Throughout the war, the government maintained its official position that it was a "liberation" effort as it was only fighting "rebels." That is, the Nigeria-Biafra war was a rebellion by "rebel Ojukwu" or "rebel leadership"—as *The New York Times* continued to portray this narrative 20 years after the war in its publication on July 14, 1987—that lasted because of "futile rebel assistance."[32] Therefore, the philosophy of national reconciliation, premised on "a war of national unity", watered the seed for delegitimizing Biafra and sustained official denial of massacres and genocide by the Nigerian state. Decades later, the truth of what happened in Biafra and Asaba, in particular, is not officially acknowledged, and so Nigeria forfeits the chance to learn from it.

In line with continuing the "war of national unity" narrative, statewide policy and state-sanctioned efforts channeled towards erasing and obliterating memories of Biafra remain. Earlier, on November 10, 1967, Gowon appointed an administrator of the newly created East Central State (carved from the Eastern Region), Ukpabi Asika, calling for Biafra's surrender, pleaded to "forget the past."[33] Godwin Onu explains that "the Nigerian state adopted a hegemonic narrative, which shapes the official history and memories of the war to suit its own vision, interests, and politics." The goal is "to forge a grand narrative and engender a basis for its own legitimacy." However, this pursuit of national history was premised on "selective forgetting and remembering," that is, "a sense of collective amnesia and forgetfulness."[34]

To help rewrite history after the war ended, official records adopted an official description of the war and obliterated the name *Biafra* from official documents. Following the government's decision to cease "to refer to any part of the East Central State of Nigeria" as Biafra, other descriptions have remained contentious. It rejected the concept of the "Nigeria-Biafra war" or the "Biafran war" and adopted the "Nigeria Civil War" instead.[35] In 1975, to erase Biafra from Nigeria's official map, it renamed the southern stretch of Nigeria's Atlantic coast, formerly known as the Bight of Biafra to the Bight of Bonny and Biafra Light. The oil pumped from this region, was renamed Bonny Light.[36] Like Biafra, its national symbols remain taboo. In 2001, Nigeria's

[27] Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre* 51.
[28] For more on women and Anioma sympathy for Biafra, see Egodi Uchendu, *Women and Conflict in the Nigerian Civil War* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 2007).
[29] Alexander A. Madiebo, *The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Pub., 1980).
[30] "Owerri is now captured: Ojukwu flees his enclave," *New Nigeria*, January 12, 1970; Madiebo, *The Nigerian Revolution* 202-203.
[31] Nigeria National Archives Ibadan CWC 1/2/12, "Blueprint for Post-War Reconstruction" (c.1970); James Brooke, "Few Traces of the Civil War Linger in Biafra," *The New York Times*, July 14, 1987, https://www.nytimes.com/1987/07/14/world/few-traces-of-the-civil-war-linger-in-biafra.html
[32] Kirk-Greene, *Crisis and Conflict* 162; NNAI, "Blueprint"; Despite the FMG's propaganda, the Nigeria-Biafra war was a war of survival for the Igbo—an existential war. Thus, labelling it a battle against "rebels"" is both deceptive and inaccurate, since it fails to account for all of the events that led to the war, including the pogrom and the Igbo collective ambition for survival through Biafra.
[33] Ukpabi Asika, "Ukpabi Asika Admin. of Nigeria's East Central State Calls on Igbos to 'Forget the Past'" Adeyinka Makinde, video, November 10, 1967, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfTw9fTzBoo
[34] Godwin Onuoha, "Shared Histories, Divided Memories: Mediating and Navigating the Tensions in Nigeria-Biafra War Discourses," *Africa Today* 63, No. 1 (Fall 2016), 4, 6, 7, 9.
[35] Onuoha, "Shared Histories" explains that: "The names 'Nigeria-Biafra War' and 'Biafran War' capture the views of those who see the Republic of Biafra as an independent entity between 1967 and 1970 by virtue of the fact that it had its own institutions of governance (army, territory, currency, flag, anthem) and was officially recognized by other African countries, including Ivory Coast, Gabon, Zambia, and Tanzania."
[36] Brookes, "Few Traces"

former Minister of State for Defence, Dupe Adelaja, referred to Biafran war veterans as traitors who deserved nothing regarding pensions or compensation. Onuoha reports that the federal government's decision created a media frenzy.[37] This would remain until October 2021, when 102 Biafran veterans received a presidential pardon.[38]

Onuoha explains that all the postwar state-sanctioned efforts "feed into the state-centric, permanent, memorial narrative."[39] Every January 15 is set aside to commemorate the annual Armed Forces Remembrance Day, which coincides with Biafra's surrender and the first military coup. It is celebrated in honor of the "unknown soldier." However, "There are no monuments anywhere in Nigeria commemorating the civil war or honoring the memory of those who perished in it; rather survivors have been piled with guilt and shame for trying to remember loved ones and grieve an event that altered their lives in tremendous ways," Harvard University visiting poet Chibuihe Obi Achimba laments.[40]

Another significant space where power is used to influence memory and project a form of collective meaning and nationhood is in sites of public education like the National War Museum, located in the traditional Igbo city of Umuahia. It is the only museum that represents the memories of the Nigeria-Biafra war in Nigeria. Commissioned in 1989, it is only a sight for military exhibits and relics that serve for the commemoration of fallen heroes on the federal Nigerian side of the war, as its motto: "That they did not die in vain," implies. Aligning with the military theme of the museum and the state-sanctioned grand narrative, "Memory repertoires," Onuoha elaborates, "such as pictures of soldiers, artifacts, and other war relics, serve to promote one set of messages, imposing a single meaning or interpretation on the war."[41]

Examining post-conflict curriculum development and textbook writing reveals the expression of "official accounts of the war." Onuoha explains that they are influenced by "political manipulation, ethnic stereotyping, economic competition, and the power of collective memory" in order "to drive the nation towards a sense of collective amnesia and forgetfulness, but when this is not possible, the government attempts to delegitimize opposing views and narratives."[42] In textbooks, it is the official interpretation of the war that is presented with "highly biased language," and references are kept to a "barest minimum."[43] Several official attempts were made to make the war a part of Nigerian history. For example, on September 12, 1969, a few months before the official end of the war, the government convened the Curriculum Conference. The conference, chaired by J. F. Ade Ajayi, an eminent professor and Vice Chancellor of the University of Ibadan, proved to be a public relations stunt that failed because of the government's insincerity toward the project. Unfortunately, it marked the beginning of the decline of teaching history in schools, and history as a discipline eventually plunged. Other attempts, including the 1980 launch of the Panel on Nigeria Since Independence History Project and the ten volumes of *Nigeria Since Independence: First Twenty-Five Years* produced by the Panel ten years later in 1990, have likewise generated public debates and outcries on what constitutes history.[44]

In 1980, the World Bank recommended the restructuring of the educational curriculum on the pretext of the non-viability of history for economic development. This reflects the neocolonialism of memory that would create what historian Akin Alao describes as a "soulless country"—a country without a sense of history.[45] During the 2009–2010 academic session, history was removed from primary and secondary schools' curricula, and this generated immense public condemnation. In 2018, this decision was reversed; however, there remains no official account of the war. Students and children would depend on the lived experience of their parents to learn about the war.[46] This has created many distorted and ahistorical accounts of the war.[47]

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[37] Chukwudi Nwabuko, "Nigeria: Ex-Biafran Soldiers Not Pensionable, Says Minister," *This Day*, December 11, 2001; Onuoha, "Shared Histories" 11; Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre* 180.

[38] Okodili Ndidi, "FG to pay gratuities of 102 ex-Biafran soldiers," *The Nation*, October 15, 2021, https://thenationonlineng.net/fg-to-pay-gratuities-of-102-ex-biafran-soldiers/

[39] Onuoha, "Shared Histories" 12.

[40] Chibuihe Obi Achimba, "The History Nigeria is Fighting Hard to Erase," accessed on May 13, 2023, https://www.arrowsmithpress.com/biafra

[41] Onuoha, "Shared Histories" 11.

[42] Onuoha, "Shared Histories" 9.

[43] Onuoha, "Shared Histories" 10.

[44] Onuoha, "Shared Histories" 9-10; On the history of the discipline of history in Nigeria, see C.B.N. Ogbogbo, "Historical Society of Nigeria: The Study of History and the Nigerian Nation Address By the President of the Historical Society of Nigeria,"*Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 24 (2015), 5.

[45] As a parallel, Chinua Achebe in *Africa's Tarnished Image* (UK, Penguin Books, 2009) criticizes European economists for recommending to African states policies they would not recommend or implement in Europe. "History and school curriculum: Matters arising," *Guardian Nigeria*, March 16, 2021, 4, https://guardian.ng/opinion/history-and-school-curriculum-matters-arising/

[46] Innocent Chizaram Ilo, "Remembering my father's Biafra: The politics of erasing history," *Al Jazeera*, May 30, 2020, https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/5/30/remembering-my-fathers-biafra-the-politics-of-erasing-history-2

[47] In April 2020, Bello El-Rufai, the son of Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai (2015–2023), engaged in a Twitter brawl with another user supposed to be of Igbo extraction, which sparked outrage and was supported by his mother. This is an illustration of the virtual and

At the university level, under the regulation of the National University Commission (NUC), the war is not officially listed in the national curriculum of Nigerian universities.[48] In the General Studies Programme (GSP), which is compulsory for all students, the history of the war is not taught. Although the political history of Nigeria in the twentieth century is a required course in history departments, it is at the individual professor's discretion to design their course to cover major political developments during this period. Hence, they can either omit or include themes from the war.[49]

To sustain its dominant and hegemonic agenda, the Nigerian state embarked on vigorous media censorship. Through the Nigeria Broadcast Corporation (NBC), conversations about the war have been censored and sometimes stopped from airing in traditional media houses. On October 4, 2017, a radio program examining the Asaba Massacre and the unresolved scars of Biafra was "shut down" in the middle of its broadcast.[50] Bird and Otanelli, highlighting the impact of the new media on the collective memory of the Asaba massacre, explain that "in an era of 'old media,' the Asaba massacre was effectively contained, memories were silenced, and the full story remained primarily local."[51]

Murtala Muhammed: Villain or Hero?

Michel Foucault's theory of "domination as an effect, or outcome, of power" is illustrative of the power relations that have sustained this manipulation of truth.[52] Despite Gowon's promise to enforce "stern disciplinary measures" on perpetrators of war crimes, no one was prosecuted for the Asaba massacre or any other massacre. Instead, the military junta that took power in the July 1966 coup remained in power until the 1999 return to democratic rule. Since then, two of these former military rulers have returned as civilian presidents—Olusegun Obasanjo and Muhammadu Buhari.

On July 29, 1975, Murtala Muhammed replaced Gowon in a bloodless coup but was assassinated on February 13, 1976. According to Chinua Achebe, his ferocious reputation for ruthlessness trailed him in his military leadership.[53] Despite ruling for less than a year, at his death, "Murtala etched his name into Nigerian folklore" because of his "character and governing style."[54] Today, this "inescapable figure" in the Asaba massacre remains popular. Max Siollun, describing him as "the most popular soldier in Nigeria's history," explains that he is still "recalled with nostalgia by many Nigerians."[55]

Officially, after his death, the state "turned him into a folk hero" to be revered. As part of the dominant hegemonic agenda, the state commemorated Murtala. His portrait adorns Nigeria's 20-naira banknote, and the country's busiest airport was renamed Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos. Other public places named in his honor include Ramat Specialist Hospital in Umuahia, Abia State, and Ramat Park in Benin, Edo State. Also, prominent music bands and musicians like Oriental Brothers and Sunny Ade recorded songs mourning "his death in extravagant terms."[56] This tendency to drive Nigeria towards a sense of collective amnesia, forgetting, and collective memory is most visible in Murtala's case. Reflecting on Stuart Hall's encoding and decoding theory, power manipulates the truth to send messages of heroism and sustain a grand narrative. Unfortunately, this has undermined the cause of justice for the Asaba people, and though it seemed that the massacre had been successfully silenced, the "open old wound" festers.

Asaba Massacre: Memorial and Monument

By the time international attention turned to Nigeria in mid-1968, the war had kept attention away from the Midwest while Asaba's slow recovery continued.[57] In 1969, aside from Biafra's efforts to get the war ruled genocide while also citing the Asaba Massacre, the *Investigators' Report* was concluded and submitted with

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physical implications of this kind of ahistoricism. Adebayo Ade-Rufus, "'What he did was wrong'—el-Rufai's son provokes outrage on Twitter," April 13, 2020, https://lifestyle.thecable.ng/ill-pass-your-mother-to-my-friends-tonight-el-rufais-son-provokes-outrage-on-twitter/

[48] Onuoha, "Shared Histories" 10.

[49] Onuoha, "Shared Histories" 10; In the author's experience as a history undergraduate at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, from 2012 to 2016, a requisite final year course was "HIS 411: Nigeria from 1960 to present." Sadly, the course outline and classes omitted the history of the war and skipped to briefly discuss the postwar reconstruction.

[50] Nelly Kalu on Midday Dialogue with Cheta Nwanze "Video of Asaba Massacre Program NBC Shut Off Air During Discussion" *Nigeria Info FM*, video, 33.24, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hCNtoyKMWFU

[51] Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre* 176.

[52] Deborah Brock, "Thinking About Power," in *Power and Everyday Practices—Second Edition*, Deborah Brock, Aryn Martin, Rebecca Raby, and Mark P. Thomas eds. (Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 24.

[53] Achebe, *The Trouble* 1.

[54] Siollun, *Oil,* 185.

[55] Ibid 161.

[56] Oriental Brothers Band International, "Murtala Muhammed," video, 08:49, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-DtvlCaV7A; Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre* 172.

[57] Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre*, 142. The British oil interest (Shell-BP) prevailed in containing the Asaba atrocities against international attention and pressure on Harold Wilson's government and Gowon's FMG.

affidavits from Asaba survivors from the Magistrate Court. Sadly, this failed to produce the desired international recognition for the massacre and Biafra.[58]

Remarkably, in 1994, after 34 years of official silence, Emma Okocha, a journalist who was orphaned by the Asaba massacre, published a groundbreaking work, *Blood on the Niger: The First Black on Black Genocide*, which was partly based on survivor testimony. Despite its shortcomings, the book disrupted official silence and generated renewed local and international attention to the tragedy.[59] Locally, on June 14, 1999, the Human Rights Violation Investigation Commission (HRVIC, popularly called the Oputa Panel) was established by President Olusegun Obasanjo to investigate gross human rights abuses from 1966 to 1999. The book and 1969 affidavits were important contributions to the *Ohanaeze Ndigbo's* (the Pan-Igbo organisation) petition of abuse against the Igbo.[60] Like South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the Oputa Panel held live public hearings broadcast on national television, and more survivors wrote and spoke publicly, stirring conversations, debates, and a new era of open discussion that attempted to reclaim the history of the massacres. Unfortunately, unlike the TRC, the Oputa Panel Report was annulled on constitutional grounds, and its report was never released to the National Archives.[61]

Two landmark episodes unfolded during and after the Oputa Panel, which hoped to get an official apology for the atrocities of the war. At the Panel, the Ohanaeze counsel quizzed Major-General Ibrahim Haruna, who replaced Murtala as GOC of the Second Division, but he retorted, "I have no apology."[62] In 2002, at the Asaba Township Stadium, Gowon faulted the setup of the Panel. Also, he offered a public apology to the people of Asaba for the atrocities committed in Asaba during the war. He claimed, "I was made ignorant of it."[63] However, it was clear that Gowon was insincere. He knew about the massacre early enough. In 1968, he reassigned Murtala to the Signal Division, where he could see no combat after intense pressure from the British Harold Wilson's government, which threatened to cut arms sales, and confrontation with a cabinet minister, Anthony Enahoro, who threatened to resign.[64]

According to Bird and Ottanelli, authors of the very remarkable work, *The Asaba Massacre*, the book was the product of an extensive and active academic partnership initiated by Asaba leadership in 2008.[65] Around 2007, Asaba leaders set up a committee of US and Nigeria-based Asabans to embark on some serious memory work, with the intention "to help 'Recalibrate' the national memory." In 2008, Emma Okocha made initial contacts with the University of South Florida (USF) for the committee. The systematic research began with a forensic examination and transitioned to a more appropriate cultural anthropology/history collaboration. In 2009, the research team hosted an Asaba Symposium at the University of South Florida, attended by scholars, survivors, and members of the diaspora community.[66] Afterwards, in late 2009, they visited Asaba, and with the blessings of the Asagba of Asaba, HRM Obi Chike Edozien, they set up the Community Advisory Board, chaired by Dr Ify Uraih and other prominent Asaba leaders, including some who had lost family members like Chuck Nduka-Eze (he had earlier presented the Asaba case at the Oputa Panel in 1999) to facilitate their community-based research.[67]

As part of their academic work in 2012, they produced a 21-minute video on the Asaba massacre that the Advisory Committee encouraged them to share online and launched a website dedicated to the Asaba memorial project.[68] They used this to track interactions in the Nigerian virtual landscape and gather data, which they extensively quoted in the book. Coincidentally, they added that the 2012 publication of Chinua Achebe's war memoir, *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra* also sparked widespread discussion and attracted more attention to their work.[69] However, their followers across different social platforms shared

[58] Joint Consultative Assembly of Biafra, letter to the Third Committee of the United Nations on Human Rights, February 15, 1968; and *Investigators' Report on a Complaint Laid Before the Directorate of The International Commission for the Study of the Crime of Genocide* (1969) accessed at University of Oxford, Rhodes House, Mss Afr.s 2399 cited in Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre*, 109-110, 32.
[59] Emma Okocha, *Blood on the Niger: The First Black on Black Genocide* (New York, Trialantic Books, 1994).
[60] Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre*, 153-155.
[61] On my visit to the public repository, the Nigeria National Archives, Enugu, the archivist informed me that they never received the document. However, it is available online: https://www.dawodu.com/oputa1.htm
[62] Sufuyan Ojeifo & Lemmy Ughegbe, "Oputa: No Regrets for the Asaba Massacre of Igbo - Haruna" *Vanguard, October* 10 2001, 2.
[63] Austin Agwuda, "Gowon Faults Setting Up of Oputa Panel," Vanguard, 9 December 2002, 4; Nnaemeka Luke Aneke, "Gowon's apology to the Igbos lack sincerity," April 9, 2003, https://nigeriaworld.com/articles/2003/apr/092-1.html
[64] Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre*, 115-116.
[65] The authors insisted that their work was objective. Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre*, 160-161.
[66] "Asaba Memorial Project Inaugural Symposium," USF Libraries, Tampa Campus, video, 36:53, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_0LzNRKZCk
[67] Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre*, 159.
[68] "The Asaba Memorial Project," accessed on November 26, 2021, https://www.asabamemorial.org/
[69] Achebe briefly mentioned the Asaba and other massacres (like the Calabar massacre) of the war: Chinua Achebe, *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 133–135, 137–140.

different perspectives on the war, partly a consequence of the collective amnesia and forgetting, collective memory, and manipulation of the truth that have characterized the history of the war.[70]

To remember those who died in the atrocities in Asaba, Asaba leaders, the community, and the survivors engaged in different forms of memorialization. In 2010, Asaba leaders initiated an annual day of remembrance on October 7.[71] Also commemorated by its diaspora community, in Asaba, it involved a prayer service at the Ogbe-Osowe site, a procession and later an assembly. In 2012, the Asaba community started the construction of a cenotaph, which was completed with the inscription of the names of many of the victims of the massacre (though not a comprehensive list). Located in Ogbe-Osowe Square, it was funded by private donations. Also, the 2012 annual memorial was attended by hundreds of people, and the press had the chance to see the museum-quality exhibit produced by Bird and Ottanelli, with their research displayed in 11 panels documenting the history of the massacres.[72] In 2014, it was reproduced in smaller panels for display at the Asaba Remembrance Day in London, sponsored by the diaspora group.[73]

In 2017, marking the 50th year since the massacre and war, Asaba leaders commemorated the "50th Anniversary of the Asaba Massacre." The programme included the presentation of Bird and Ottanelli's book and a colloquium with the theme: Asaba Rebirth." It featured prominent Nigerians like Wole Soyinka, Alex Ekwueme (former Nigeria's Vice President), and Bishop Hassan Matthew Kukah (a member of the Oputa Panel). At the 3-day event held from October 5-8, the Asagba called for the "guarantee [of] justice."[74] On October 6, 2018, Asaba leaders unveiled the Asaba Memorial Foundation Secretariat. As indicated in 2017, in 2020, Nduka-Eze resurrected the vision of building more Asaba massacre monuments. He announced plans to construct a new cenotaph "to salvage meaning from the tragedy" and solicited support. The statement published on the official website bears an emotional inscription: "Earth Conceal Not The Blood Shed On Thee" for the proposed monument. While the monument is expected to have many remarkable qualities, including having the tallest cross in Africa (100m) and a memorial square, they hope it will become a tourist attraction while honoring the dead with more legible display names when it is constructed.[75]

The 2021 event, held at the Asagba's Palace, was specially dedicated to Asaba women who lost husbands and children and suffered gravely. The keynote address was delivered by Nigeria's first female permanent representative to the UN, an Asaban, Joy Ogwu. "This year's anniversary is special because we are dedicating it to the women of Asaba, whose husbands were killed but vowed to bring up the children they left. Asaba women were left widowed but they did not relent…," the Asagba of Asaba, HRM Obi Edozien said, extolling women. He called on Nigerians to "own" the Asaba massacre and "the Federal Government to commemorate a cenotaph." He demanded reparation in the form of the establishment of a federal university in Asaba to compensate for the injuries done to the community.[76] Also, the Asaba Development Union (ASU) published the list of victims of the October 7 massacre in a national daily. Like the Ogbe-Osowe cenotaph, the names were organised based on victims from each of the five villages in Asaba.[77]

Asaba people, families, and individuals also deployed significant efforts to commemorate their loss, reconstruct the history of the massacre, and challenge the official silence. At the home of Dr. and Mrs Emmanuel A.C. Nwanze (Dr. Nwanze was a member of the Advisory Board), is an outdoor mural. It is a beautiful work produced by a local artist that descriptively depicts the October 7 massacre from start to finish. Also, families have taken the initiative to remember their dead through plagues. Several of these family commemorative plaques can be found installed in local churches like St. Joseph Catholic Church, Asaba. They adorn church pews, though they do not bear the circumstance of death; they bear records of the names and dates of death of several family members.[78] Despite these efforts, to date, no official recognition or apology for the Asaba massacre has been issued.

[70] See video: S. Elizabeth Bird, "Most Vulnerable Nigerians: The Legacy of the Asaba Massacres," video, 21:44, https://vimeo.com/71894404; Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre*, 168–171.
[71] Emma Okocha, "Florida Annual Memoriam For Asaba," October 2, 2010, https://asaba.com/florida-annual-memoriam-for-asaba/
[72] While the Exhibit is displayed privately at the Asagba's palace, to view the exhibit, see: "Exhibit Gallery," accessed on November 26, 2021, https://www.asabamemorial.org/memorial-exhibit
[73] Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre*, 207–208.
[74] "50 Years After, Asaba Set to Honour Heroes of October 7 Massacre," *Independent Newspaper, October 2, 2017,* A11; "Soyinka, Duke, Kukah, Nwodo, others for 50th memorial of Asaba Massacre," *Vanguard Newspaper*, October 4, 2017, 12.
[75] "Foreward: In Memory of the Asaba Massacre," Asaba Massacre Memorial Monument, accessed on November 26, 2021, https://asabamemorialmonument.org/memorial-monument/
[76] Matthew Ochei, "Asagba urges Nigeria to 'own' Asaba massacre 54 years after," *Punch*, October 21, 2021, 4.
[77] Asaba Development Union (ADU), "Asaba Massacre of October 7, 1967," *Vanguard*, October 7, 2021, 30.
[78] Bird and Ottanelli, *The Asaba Massacre*, 206-207.

Conclusion

The Asaba massacre exemplifies many incidents of the use of state power by the Nigerian state to cause harm and, through the deployment of "memory power", induce selective amnesia and forgetting, as well as collective memory and meaning. This study illustrates state-centric efforts to obliterate its dark memories as well as regional attempts to challenge official narratives. It raises concern about a new dimension of neocolonialism—of memory—and its impact on remembrance and commemoration in post-colonial communities. Through various efforts to induce collective amnesia and meaning and manipulate the truth, the Nigerian state celebrates certain individuals like Murtala Muhammed to the detriment of justice and the benefit of learning from the past. This process of remembering the Asaba massacre has produced an oppositional struggle against the grand narrative agenda. Through various efforts, including the construction of a monument, a mural, plagues, annual memorials, publications, and collaborations, Asabans hope to ensure that the massacre does not constitute a relic of history but a memory that is accepted as public knowledge with full recognition, acknowledgement, and even an official apology.

An Analysis Of Economic, Social, And Political Factors For The Emergence Of The Kingdom Of Zazzau C.1492–1808

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Abstract
This paper critically analyzes the economic, social, and political factors that contributed to the establishment and consolidation of the Kingdom of Zazzau between c.1492 and 1808, a prominent Hausa city-state in the central Sudan region of pre-jihad and pre-colonial Northern Nigeria. Economically, Zazzau's growth was anchored on its fertile agricultural environment, active craft and commercial sectors, strategic location along trans-Saharan and internal trade routes, and reliance on slave labor and tribute systems. These features facilitated the accumulation of wealth, strengthened political authority, and bolstered military power. Socially, the integration of diverse ethnic groups—such as the Hausa, Fulani, Gbagyi, Nupe, Kanuri, and Yoruba—fostered a cohesive cultural identity centered around Islamic education, centralized administration (Sarauta system), rich traditions, and structured hierarchies. Politically, the Sarauta institution provided a framework for stable monarchical leadership, supported by a Council of Nobles, Islamic legal norms, military organization, and alliances with surrounding states and Islamic centers. The study contends that the fusion of these economic resources, social dynamics, and political mechanisms enabled Zazzau to evolve into a formidable precolonial power. Drawing from historical documentation, oral interviews, and scholarly sources, the research highlights the multifaceted nature of state formation and governance in indigenous African polities prior to colonial intervention.
Keywords: Analysis, Cultural, Economic, Emergence, Political.

Introduction

The Kingdom of Zazzau, known today as Zaria, stands as one of the most historically significant Hausa city-states in pre-jihad and precolonial Africa. Established around 1492 and enduring until its political transformation following the Sokoto Jihad of 1808, the Kingdom of Zazzau emerged as a dominant regional power within the Central Sudan. Its rise and sustainability were not coincidental but rather the result of a confluence of interrelated economic, social, and political dynamics that laid the foundation for a highly organized and influential state. This paper examines these foundational factors in detail, beginning with the kingdom's economic base—rich agricultural practices, vibrant craft industries, domestic and long-distance trans-Saharan trade networks, and systematic taxation—which provided material wealth and economic stability. The social fabric of the kingdom, shaped by heterogeneous and diverse communities, Islamic religious integration, and well-defined social hierarchies, fostered cohesion and cultural identity. Politically, the centralized *Sarauta* administrative system of governance, smooth dynastic succession, military conquests, and diplomatic alliances contributed to the kingdom's internal stability and external influence. By analyzing these dimensions, this study presents a holistic view of how the Kingdom of Zazzau was established, governed, and expanded, offering insight into the broader patterns of state formation and power consolidation in precolonial Nigeria and the Sahelian belt.

The Economic Factors Responsible for the Establishment of the Kingdom of Zazzau

The establishment of the Kingdom of Zazzau between 1492 and 1808 AD was deeply influenced by several critical economic factors. Agriculture played a foundational role in the economy of the Kingdom of Zazzau, as it was the primary source of livelihood for most of the population.[1] Zazzau's fertile land, which lies within the northern savannah region, was ideal for farming a variety of crops including millet (*Gero)* and sorghum (*Dawa)*. Later, during the 16th century, rice and maize were introduced. The fertile soil and favorable climate allowed for the production of surplus crops, which contributed to food security and supported population growth.[2] In addition to crops, the kingdom also engaged in animal husbandry, from indigenous patrilineage Fulani cattle rearers such as the Fulanin Katsina from '*Yan* Doto, Fulanin '*Yan* Doton Gusau, Fulanin Wunti, Fulain Yesque, Fulanin Joli, Fulanin Gadidi, Fulanin Dan-Durori, Fulanin Babeji or the Fulanin Shanono from Kano and Fulanin Torankawa from Sokoto,[3] which further bolstered the economy. These agricultural activities were essential for sustaining the local population, feeding military forces, and providing surplus for trade with

[1] Oral Interview with Ja'afaru Dabo, Age: 53, Occupation: Ward Head of *Anguwan* Fatika, Zaria City and Community Leader at his residence in *Anguwan* Fatika, Zaria City on 9th December, 2023.
[2] A., Smith, *The Early States of the Central Sudan*. Longman, 1965. P. 128.
[3] M., G., Smith. *Government in Zazzau 1800 – 1950*. International African Institute, Oxford University, London. P. 136.

neighboring regions. This agricultural productivity also allowed Zazzau to become a major supplier of foodstuffs to other parts of the Hausa region, contributing to its economic importance.[4]

Zazzau's location on the southern edge of the trans-Saharan trade network was a critical economic factor that facilitated its rise to prominence. The trans-Saharan trade linked West Africa with North Africa and the broader Mediterranean and Islamic worlds, allowing the flow of goods, ideas, and wealth. Zazzau's economy benefited from the trade in gold, textiles, salt, horses, and other goods that passed through its territories.[5] The kingdom's strategic position allowed it to serve as a key intermediary in the trade of slaves, which were exported to North Africa and the Middle East in exchange for luxury goods, such as spices, swords, silk, metal ware, and religious books. This trade brought significant wealth into the kingdom, which in turn supported the development of urban centres (*Birane*) and allowed the rulers of Zazzau to build a powerful political and military structure.[6]

One of the most important economic activities that contributed to the growth of Zazzau was its domestic trade in slaves. Slavery was a central component of the economic system, with slaves being used for agricultural labor, military service, and domestic work. Zazzau's participation in the trans-Saharan slave trade was particularly profitable, as the kingdom supplied slaves to North African and Middle Eastern markets in exchange for valuable goods like horses, textiles, and weapons.[7] The kingdom's ability to acquire slaves through military campaigns and raids, especially in the areas south of its borders, such as the Basa of Gumna, the Busa of Mashegu beyond the Mariga River to the west of the valley of Mariga River, the Kamuku community of Tegina, Kusheriki, and Kwangoma. To the East of the Kingdom of Zazzau, it also came to exercise tremendous influence in the Gbagyi Community, such as the Gbagyi of Dogon Dawa, Chikun, and Galadiman Kogo.[8]

The Kingdom of Zazzau also exercised a considerable influence over most southern communities of Kushaka, Kuta, Guni-Dan-Guni, and Fuka. These communities were systematically brought under its influence between the 16th and the end of the 18th century hence they contributed to its economic prosperity. The same factors are also evident among the Hausawa and Hausanised communities of Kajuru, including the Kamanta and Kagoro to the southeast of Zazzau, as well as Kauru to the east of the River Kaduna. Kauru comprises a mix of Gbagyi and various small hill communities such as the Binawa, Rishawa, Zurubu, Kiballo, Kinuku, Ruruma, Rumaiya, Gure Kahugu, Dargi, Kono, Kaibi, and Kaitimi. South of Kauru are the western Kurama, Chawai, Morwa, the Kataf, Kaje, and other groups such as the Yeskwa, Gwandara, Kwotto, and Doma.[9]

Additionally, to the south of the Benue River, ancient Hausa immigrant settlements known as Abakpa or Abakwuriga (as referred to by the Idoma and Jukun) existed. These communities developed tributary dependency traditions with the Kingdom of Zazzau.[10] This relationship was largely influenced by the activities of *Zagezagi* immigrant traders, blacksmiths, and farmers who settled in the Zango community in this area during the period under study. Slaves not only generated wealth through trade but also played a crucial role in sustaining the agricultural economy by providing labor for large-scale farming operations in the king's farms. This economic system helped Zazzau maintain its political and military strength and facilitated the expansion of its influence across the region through effective control of trade routes.[11]

The Kingdom of Zazzau's economy benefited significantly from the growth of local crafts and industries, particularly in the areas of textile production, metalwork, and pottery. Scholars such as Mahadi Adamu have noted that Zaria was a major centre for hand-woven and dyed textiles, with weaving and dyeing forming a core part of household and commercial activities.[12] Furthermore, UNESCO's *General History of Africa* also highlights that Zazzau developed thriving industries in blacksmithing, pottery, and weaving, which not only served local needs but were integrated into broader West African trade networks.[13] Basil Davidson reinforces

[4] Y., B., Usman, *The Transformation of Katsina, c.1400–1883: The Emergence and Overthrow of the Sarauta System and the Establishment of the Emirate*. Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1979. P. 203.
[5] P., E., Lovejoy, "The Role of the Wangara in the Economic Transformation of the Central Sudan in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries." *The Journal of African History*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1971, pp. 581–600.
[6] J., S., Hogendorn, *The Slave Trade in the Central Sudan: An Economic Study of Slavery in the Central Sudan in the 19th Century*. Oxford University Press, 1966. P. 191.
[7] P., E., Lovejoy, "The Role of the Wangara in the Economic Transformation of the Central Sudan in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries." *The Journal of African History*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1971, pp. 581–600.
[8] A., Smith, Some Notes on the History of Zazzau Under Hausa King, *in Zaria and Its Region*, Edited M., J., Motimore, 1970. Pp. 86 – 87.
[9] A., Smith, Some Notes on the History of Zazzau Under Hausa King, *in Zaria and Its Region*, Edited M., J., Motimore, 1970. Pp. 86 - 87.
[10] A., Smith, Some Notes on the History of Zazzau Under Hausa King, *in Zaria and Its Region*, Edited M., J., Motimore, Department of Geography , Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Occasional Paper No. 4, Nigeria, 1970. Pp 86.
[11] Y., B., Usman, *The Transformation of Katsina, c.1400–1883: The Emergence and Overthrow of the Sarauta System and the Establishment of the Emirate*. Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1979. See also A., Smith, Some Notes on the History of Zazzau Under Hausa King, *in Zaria and Its Region*, Edited M., J., Motimore, Department of Geography , Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Occasional Paper No. 4, Nigeria, 1970. Pp 82 – 102.
[12] Mahdi Adamu, *The Hausa Factor in West African History* (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1978), 85–87.
[13] UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO), *General History of Africa, Volume IV: Africa from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century*, ed. D. T. Niane (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 245–247.

this by describing Zaria as a town where skilled artisans produced finely dyed cloths and metal tools that contributed to both its economy and cultural identity.[14] Historical records like the *Kano Chronicle* further confirm the importance of women's participation in cloth production and dyeing within Zazzau society.[15] Additionally, archival trade documents from the Timbuktu-based Ahmad Baba Institute reveal that Zazzau's textile and metal goods were among the items traded across trans-Saharan routes.[16]

The kingdom was known for its skilled artisans who produced high-quality leather goods, such as fine leather products which were in high demand in North Africa and locally in regional markets.[17] The production of textiles, especially cotton cloth, was a significant industry in Zazzau. Cotton was grown locally, and the cloth was woven and dyed in various towns and villages before being traded across the region.[18] In addition to textiles, the kingdom had a thriving ironworking industry, which produced working tools, farms implements and military weapons, and other metal goods. Iron ore is found in some of the ancient settlements of the Kingdom of Zazzau, such as Dutsen Abba[19], Wucicciri, Kargi, Madarkaci, Turunku, Tukur-Tukur, Hanwa, Kufena, Dumbi, Farakwai, Tsauni, Dutsen Wai, Hange, Pampula Hills[20] and, Kasaru tin mines.[21] Ironworking was essential for both agriculture and military purposes, as it provided the tools needed for farming and the weapons necessary for defense and expansion. The availability of locally produced goods helped Zazzau to develop a self-sustaining economy, which reduced its dependence on external sources for essential commodities.[22]

Zazzau's kings also developed a tribute system that contributed to the kingdom's economic stability. The kingdom imposed taxes on agricultural produce, trade goods, and other forms of economic activity. Merchants passing through Zazzau's territories were required to pay tolls and taxes, generating significant revenue for the royal treasury. These tolls were levied on caravan routes, canoemen, and market transactions. Additionally, an annual occupational tax, a household tax of 2,000 cowries per family, and a death duty on the estates of officeholders contributed to the kingdom's wealth.[23] The system of taxation enabled the ruling class to accumulate wealth and maintain control over the kingdom's economic resources. The king's wealth was also bolstered through multiple channels. The throne retained direct control over certain communities, and the royal domain (Rumanda) was populated by royal slaves. The king inherited his predecessor's slave settlements, especially from his father. He also received a substantial share of state taxes, including a half-share of military booty and tributes from vassal states, particularly from non-Muslim communities. Other sources of revenue included grain tithes (*zakka*), a hoe tax of 500 cowries, taxes from blacksmiths and dyers, levies on dye-pits, and an annual tax from Fulani herdsmen (*jangali*). The *jangali* required herdsmen owning more than 30 cattle, to pay one cattle for every ten. Furthermore, the king supervised the movement of Fulani herdsmen through the appointment of Ardo, who managed their migration and resolved disputes.[24]

This system not only strengthened economic control but also reinforced political dominance over neighboring regions. The combination of taxes, tributes, and tolls significantly enhanced the economic strength and stability of the Zazzau Kingdom.[25] The wealth generated from taxes and tribute was used to fund military campaigns, build massive infrastructure, and support the royal court, ensuring the kingdom had continued political and economic dominance.[26] The Kingdom of Zazzau's participation in both regional and long-distance trade networks was another crucial economic factor in its development. The kingdom was well-integrated into the broader Hausa trading system, which connected various Hausa city-states, including Kano, Katsina, and Gobir. Zazzau's central location allowed it to serve as a hub for trade within the Hausa region, facilitating the exchange of goods between the savannah and forest zones.[27]

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[14] Basil Davidson, *The Lost Cities of Africa* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1959), 142–144.
[15] *The Kano Chronicle*, translated in H. R. Palmer, "The Kano Chronicle," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 38 (1908): 58–98.
[16] Timbuktu Archives (Ahmad Baba Institute), "Trans-Saharan Trade Records," Manuscript Reference AB/TS/043, accessed via UNESCO Memory of the World Project.
[17] Smith, M. G. *The Economy of Hausa Communities of Zaria*. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1955, pp. 37 – 44.
[18] A., Smith, *The Early States of the Central Sudan*. Longman, 1971. P. 179.
[19] R. M. Lawal, *Archaeological Survey of Dutsen Abba Hills; Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria.* Department of Archaeology, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 2011. An M. A. Archaeology at the Department of Archaeology, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria 2011. P. 59.
[20] M. Aliyu, *The History of Birnin Zaria: A Study into the Socio-economic and Political History of Zaria c. 1492 – 1808AD.* P. 23 – 25.
[21] L., J., Lamba. *The Administration of Colonial Taxation in Zaria Province: A Case Study of Kagarko District, 1902 – 1960.* An M. A. History at the Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria 2015. P. 66.
[22] J., S., *The Slave Trade in the Central Sudan: An Economic Study of Slavery in the Central Sudan in the 19th Century*. Oxford University Press, 1966. P. 229.
[23] Smith, M. G. *The Economy of Hausa Communities of Zaria*. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1955, pp. 66–68.
[24] M., G., Smith. *Government in Zazzau 1800 – 1950.* International African Institute, Oxford University, London. P. 136.
[25] M.G. Smith, *Government in Zazzau 1800 – 1900*, International African Institution. Oxford University Press, London, 1960 p. 94.
[26] A., Smith, *The Early States of the Central Sudan*. Longman, 1971. 89.
[27] E., Isichei, *A History of Nigeria*. Longman, 1983. P…; See also See also M., Adamu, *The Hausa Factor in the West African History,* Ahmadu Bello University Press and in Collaboration with Oxford University Press, Ahmadu Bello University History Series. London, 1978.

The kingdom's integration into wider trading networks allowed it to access a diverse range of goods, from North African luxury items such as salt, crops, shells, and cowries, perfumes, beads, clothes, horses, camels, metal works, and religious books, and agricultural products from the forest belts, which include kola nut, gum, and slaves. This trade not only brought wealth into Zazzau but also fostered economic diversification, as the kingdom's rulers and merchants invested in different sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, crafts, and military expansion.[28] The economic establishment of the Kingdom of Zazzau between 1492 and 1808 AD was driven by several key factors, including its strategic location on trans-Saharan trade route networks, agricultural productivity, the importance of the domestic slave trade, and the development of local industries. The kingdom's participation in regional and international trade networks, coupled with a strong system of taxation and tribute, allowed it to generate significant wealth and maintain political and military dominance in the region. These economic factors were essential to Zazzau's rise as a powerful Hausa city-state and its integration into the broader economic systems of West Africa. Other factors not discussed in this paper include cultural factors and the roles of individuals in the establishment of the Kingdom of Zazzau.

The Social Factors Responsible for the Establishment of the Kingdom of Zazzau

The Kingdom of Zazzau, which flourished between 1492 and 1808 AD in present-day northern Nigeria, was shaped by several social factors that contributed to its establishment, development, and prominence in the region. These factors include the integration of diverse groups such as the Hausa, Kamuku, Ikulu, Chawai, Kachecheri, Doma, Gbagyi, Fulani, Jukun, Nupe, Yoruba and Kanuri, the rise of centralized political institutions, the influence of religion and culture, and the establishment of social hierarchies. Each of these social elements played a key role in the kingdom's growth and sustainability during this period of study. The Kingdom of Zazzau is blessed with human diversity that speeds up integration, as part of the larger Hausa city-state system. The Kingdom of Zazzau was a melting pot of diverse groups, such as the Nupe, Fulani, Yoruba, Kanuri, and other indigenous communities of Hausa, Fulani and Gbagyi. This ethnic diversity fostered social cohesion through shared economic and cultural activities. The integration of these groups within the kingdom facilitated trade, labor specialization, and cultural exchanges, all of which contributed to the kingdom's stability and prosperity.[29] The Hausa people, who formed the dominant group, played a critical role in the kingdom's development. Their ability to integrate with other groups, including migrants and traders, helped create a diverse and vibrant society. This social flexibility allowed Zazzau to attract settlers, artisans, and traders, increasing its population and economic base.[30] The Fulani, for example, contributed significantly to the kingdom's pastoral economy and helped in spreading Islamic culture and values.[31]

The Kingdom of Zazzau operated a centralized *Sarauta* political system of government. The establishment of a centralized political system was a critical factor in the development of the Kingdom of Zazzau. Zazzau adopted the *Sarauta* system, a hierarchical system of kingship typical of Hausa city-states. This system was characterized by a strong, centralized authority under a king (*Sarki)* who held considerable power over the kingdom's administration, military, and religious affairs.[32] The king was supported by a council of nobles and advisors, many of whom held administrative and military roles such as *Madawaki, Galadima Wambai, Dallatu, Garkuwa Babba, Makama Babba, Kuyambana, Lifidi, Wagu, Shinagu, Barwa* and *Wan'ya.*[33] This form of centralized governance enabled Zazzau to maintain order, coordinate agricultural activities, organize trade, and defend its borders.[34] The *Sarauta* system of administration also allowed the kingdom to exert control over surrounding territories and expand its influence through conquest and diplomacy. The rise of centralized

P. 40, where he argued the Hausa traders exported the following listed items such as *Kwashe, Barage, Rigar Kwanda* for men, *Turkudi, Arikilla,* for both men and women, *Sanda Rishi, Horses, Beads (Tsakiya), Sambaruwa, Tagode* for women, fancy objects, spices, locus-beans cakes (*Daddawa),* onions (*Albasa), Garlic (Tafarnuwa),* to *Kwararrafa Kingdom,* while in return the Hausa imported the following listed items from *Kwararrafa Kingdom;* slave, mineral salt, antimony, and silver mined in Arufu, Kwanna, in Benue valley which in turn facilitates the permanent settlement of Hausa weavers, dyers, tailors, black smith, drummers musician, traders and Islamic scholars (*Mallams).*

[28] P., E., Lovejoy, "The Role of the Wangara in the Economic Transformation of the Central Sudan in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries." *The Journal of African History*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1971, pp. 581–600.

[29] E., Isichei, *A History of Nigeria*. Longman, 1983. P. 68.

[30] Oral Interview with Umar Abubakar Sadiq, Age: 62, Occupation: Ardon Zazzau at his residence at No. 14 Abdullahi Nasir Street, Banazzau Ward, Zaria City on 8th July, 2024.

[31] A., Smith, *The Early States of the Central Sudan*. Longman, 1971, p. 198.

[32] Y., B., Usman, *The Transformation of Katsina, c.1400–1883: The Emergence and Overthrow of the Sarauta System and the Establishment of the Emirate*. Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1979, p. 84.

[33] A.M. Fagachi, *Historical Origin of the Traditional Titles and Culture of Zazzau Emirate*, Sankore Educational Publishers Limited Zaria-Kaduna State, Nigeria, 2015. Pp. 32 – 33.

[34] Oral Interview with Shehu Ahmad, Age: 57, Occupation: Former *Barayan* Zazzau and now *Wakilin* Tarihin Zazzau at his office in the Palace of the Emir of Zazzau (Zazzau Emirate) on 15th May, 2024.

authority ensured the stability and cohesion necessary for the kingdom's growth.[35] The early spread of Islam and the religious influence in the Kingdom of Zazzau was a major social factor in the kingdom's establishment and growth. Islam arrived in the region through trans-Saharan trade routes, introduced by Berber and Arab traders. By the 14th century, Islam had become the dominant religion among the ruling elites of Zazzau, influencing not only their religious practices but also their political and legal systems.[36]

Some of these Islamic institutions, including *Masjids* (*Masallatai*) and Quranic schools (*Makarantun Allo*), were established, contributing to the social and intellectual development of the kingdom. The adoption of Islamic law in the governance of Zazzau further centralized authority and legitimized the rule of the kings. Islamic scholars (*Ulama)*, became influential in advising the rulers and shaping the kingdom's policies. This religious cohesion helped Zazzau establish stronger ties with other Islamic states and empires in West Africa and the larger Islamic world.[37]

The Kingdom of Zazzau is rich in cultural practices and traditions, which also played a significant role in its establishment and growth. The Hausa people were known for their oral traditions, including storytelling, poetry, and music, which helped preserve the history and values of the kingdom. The cultural practices of Zazzau were heavily influenced by both indigenous African traditions and Islamic culture, creating a unique blend that helped define the identity of the kingdom. Festivals, rituals (*Bori*), and ceremonies (Naming Ceremony and Wedding *Fatiha*) were integral to the social fabric of Zazzau. For instance, the *Gani* festival, celebrated annually in almost every month throughout the year, was an important event that reinforced the kingdom's unity and showcased its power and wealth. These cultural events served to strengthen social bonds among the kingdom's inhabitants and foster a sense of shared identity.[38] The Kingdom of Zazzau was characterized by a well-defined social hierarchy and societal differential stratification, with the king at the top, followed by the nobles (*'Ya'yan Sarki*), military leaders (*Madawaki)*, traders ('*Yankasuwa)*, artisans *(Masu sana'ar hannu)*, and commoners *Talakawa)*. This stratified social system was essential for maintaining order and facilitating the kingdom's economic and political functions. The ruling class, particularly the king and his council, held significant influence over the kingdom's administration and military, while traders and artisans contributed to the economic vitality of the state.[39]

The existence of a strong aristocracy (*Sarki, Galadima Wambai, Dallatu, Dangaladima, Wan'yan)*, supported by Islamic scholars *(Mallamai)* such as the *Imam* of *Jumah* and *Liman Kona* and military leaders (*Madawaki)*, ensured the smooth functioning of the kingdom's institutions. For example, King Isiyaku Bakwa Turunku is credited for repelling the attack by Sarkin Kano Kanajeji Danyaji. At the same time, he also repelled the Jukun attack, and pushed them out of the Kingdom of Zazzau, and began a massive expansionist programme, to which the Kingdom of Zazzau was committed from the 16th century onwards. King Rababuwa Dan Asha-kuka, popularly known as King Muhammad Rabbo, is also credited for declaring Islam as the state religion and King Muhammad *Makama* (1804 – 1808), who fled Zaria – the capital of the Kingdom of Zazzau – to avoid military confrontation with the jihadists. In addition, the social stratification created opportunities for the specialization of labor, which enhanced the kingdom's agricultural and commercial productivity. The clear division of social roles contributed to the stability and prosperity of the kingdom, as each group played its part in maintaining the social and economic order.[40] The Kingdom of Zazzau was surrounded by major trans-Sahara trade routes network. The kingdom participated in long-distance trade networks, which fostered social mobility and contributed to its establishment and growth. Merchants and traders enjoyed a high status in society due to their role in facilitating trade with other regions, such as the trans-Saharan routes across West Africa and Africa. The wealth generated from trade allowed some members of society to ascend the social ladder, further integrating economic activities with social structures.[41]

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[35] E., Isichei, *A History of Nigeria*. Longman, 1983. P … See also A., Smith, Some Notes on the History of Zazzau Under Hausa King, *in Zaria and Its Region*, Edited M., J., Motimore, 1970. P. 201.

[36] P., E., Lovejoy, "The Role of the Wangara in the Economic Transformation of the Central Sudan in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries." *The Journal of African History*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1971, pp. 581–600. See also M., Adamu, *The Hausa Factor in the West African History*, Ahmadu Bello University Press and in Collaboration with Oxford University Press, Ahmadu Bello University History Series. London, 1978. p.9.

[37] J., O., Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire: Al-Sa'di's Ta'rikh al-Sudan Down to 1613 and Other Contemporary Documents*. Brill, 1999 p. 88.

[38] A., Smith, *The Early States of the Central Sudan*. Longman, 1971. See also M., Hassan, & S., Na'ibi *Chronicles of Abuja,* Ibadan University Press, 1953. P. 158. See Also Makama H. and S. Naibi Chronicle of Abuja, Ibadan University Press, 1952. P.

[39] B., M., Barkindo, *Kano and Some of Her Neighbours: A Historical Survey of the Kano Chronicle*. Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1989. P. 37. See also Smith, M.G. the Economy of Hausa Communities of Zaria. A Report to the Colonial Social Science Research Council. Published by Her Majestys Stationery Office for the Colonial Office, 1955. P. 16.

[40] E., Isichei, *A History of Nigeria*. Longman, 1983. P. 117. See also Smith, M.G. the Economy of Hausa Communities of Zaria. A Report to the Colonial Social Science Research Council. Published by Her Majestys Stationery Office for the Colonial Office, 1955. Pp. 65 – 83.

[41] P., E., Lovejoy, "The Role of the Wangara in the Economic Transformation of the Central Sudan in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries." *The Journal of African History*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1971, pp. 581–600. See also M., Adamu, *The Hausa Factor in the West African*

Trade also brought new ideas, technologies, and cultural practices into Zazzau, enriching its social and intellectual life. The presence of foreign traders and scholars, such as the Islamic scholars and preachers from *Liman* Kona from Kanem Borno Empire, Imam of Jumah from Futo Toro (Mali), and *Zagezagi* Islamic scholars also from Kanem Borno Empire, contributed to the kingdom's cosmopolitan character, enhancing its influence in the wider region and the sedentary of diverse groups in the Kingdom, such as Fulani, Nupe, Yoruba, and Kanuris. The establishment and growth of the Kingdom of Zazzau between 1492 and 1808 AD, were profoundly influenced by social factors such as various diversities, centralized governance, Islamic influence, cultural traditions, social hierarchy, and trade. These elements created a cohesive society that was able to adapt to changing circumstances, facilitating Zazzau's rise as a significant political and economic power in West Africa.[42]

The Political Factors Responsible for the Establishment of the Kingdom of Zazzau

The political establishment and consolidation of the Kingdom of Zazzau between 1492 and 1808 AD were significantly influenced by various political factors. These include the emergence of a centralized political structure and institutions of the *Sarauta* system of Kingship, military expansion and alliances, diplomatic engagements, and the integration of Islamic ethics for governance. Each of these factors contributed to the formation and establishment of a strong and stable political entity that would eventually become one of the most influential Hausa city-states in pre-jihad West Africa. The establishment of a centralized political system, better known as the *Sarauta* system of administration, is a key political factor that contributed to the establishment of the Kingdom of Zazzau. This political structure, common among Hausa city-states, was based on a hierarchical system of kingship with a king, or *Sarki*, at the top. The king held supreme authority over the administration, military, and judicial functions of the kingdom.[43] The *Sarauta* system organized the kingdom into distinct roles, with the king supported by a council of noblemen and titled officials who controlled various aspects of governance, such as administration, taxation, law enforcement, and military affairs. This system provided a stable and organized framework for governance, enabling the kingdom to efficiently manage its resources and populations. The clear political hierarchy allowed Zazzau to maintain order and consolidate power in the hands of the ruling elite. Through this system, Zazzau was able to maintain control over its territories and project its influence beyond its immediate borders.[44]

The establishment of smooth Royal succession and political legitimacy by the kingdom's kingmakers played a significant role in the political stability of the Kingdom of Zazzau. The legitimacy of the king was reinforced through dynastic rule, often with succession based on hereditary principles or selection from among royal family members. This ensured continuity in leadership and minimized the risk of internal conflicts over the throne. The *Sarauta* system of administration ensured that the leadership was centralized under a ruling dynasty, and succession disputes, while present, were generally controlled through internal mechanisms of negotiation and power sharing among the nobility,[45] especially the *Madawaki*, who is also the eldest son of the king or the *Dangaladima*, presumptive heir to the throne.[46] The king's authority was further legitimized through religious practices, particularly the adoption of Islam the management of the *Sarauta* system of administration in later centuries, which allowed kings to present themselves as divinely sanctioned leaders. This helped to reinforce the king's position and foster loyalty among the population, strengthening the political structure of the kingdom.[47]

The military strength of the Kingdom of Zazzau was another crucial political factor in its establishment. Like other Hausa city-states, Zazzau maintained a formidable military force that was used to expand its territory and influence. The kingdom's ability to organize and mobilize its military forces allowed it to assert control over neighboring regions, subjugate rival groups, and establish itself as a dominant political power in the region, in addition to providing adequate security in its fortified gates, market toll gates, and surrounding villages.[48] The

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History, Ahmadu Bello University Press and in Collaboration with Oxford University Press, Ahmadu Bello University History Series. London, 1978. P. 173.

[42] Y., Abubakar, A History of Islamic Education in Zaria City 1808 – 1960.

[43] A., Smith, *The Early States of the Central Sudan*. Longman, 1971. See also A.M. Fagachi, *Historical Origin of the Traditional Titles and Culture of Zazzau Emirate*, Sankore Educational Publishers Limited Zaria-Kaduna State, Nigeria, 2015. Pp. 32 – 33.

[44] Y., B., Usman, *The Transformation of Katsina, c.1400–1883: The Emergence and Overthrow of the Sarauta System and the Establishment of the Emirate*. Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1979. See also A., Smith, Some Notes on the History of Zazzau Under Hausa King, *in Zaria and Its Region*, Edited M., J., Motimore, Department of Geography , Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Occasional Paper No. 4, Nigeria, 1970. Pp 82 – 102.

[45] E., Isichei, *A History of Nigeria*. Longman, 1983, p. 119.

[46] A., Smith, Some Notes on the History of Zazzau Under Hausa King, *in Zaria and Its Region*, Edited M., J., Motimore. 1970. P. 81.

[47] J., O., Hundwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire: Al-Sa'di's Ta'rikh al-Sudan Down to 1613 and Other Contemporary Documents*. Brill, 1999. P 78.

[48] P., E., Lovejoy, "The Role of the Wangara in the Economic Transformation of the Central Sudan in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries." *The Journal of African History*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1971, pp. 581–600.

Zazzau's military prowess also played a role in securing its borders against external threats, including raids from neighboring kingdoms and incursions by nomadic groups. Military campaigns led to the acquisition of land, slaves, tribute, and mineral resources, further enhancing the kingdom's economic and political standing. The capture of slaves, in particular, was essential for both agricultural production and trade, especially within the trans-Saharan trade routes. As a result, military conquest became a key factor in the kingdom's political and economic growth.[49]

The establishment of effective political alliance and diplomatic relations with neighboring kingdoms was another factor for Zazzau's political stability and growth, for the Hausa city-states, including Zazzau, often engaged in both rivalry and cooperation with one another, depending on the circumstances. Through diplomatic engagements, marriage alliances, and trade relations, Zazzau was able to secure its position within the Hausa political system and build alliances that were beneficial for trade and mutual defense.[50] The kingdom's political influence extended to relations with the larger Islamic world, especially with North African and Arab traders who brought new ideas, religious practices, and political concepts to the region. The establishment of diplomatic ties with Islamic states further strengthened Zazzau's political legitimacy and facilitated access to valuable trade routes. This integration into the wider Islamic political and economic networks allowed Zazzau to benefit from the flow of wealth, ideas, and cultural practices from North Africa and beyond.[51]

The adoption of Islam as the state religion in the 16th century, was a transformative political factor in the establishment of the Kingdom of Zazzau. The spread of Islam introduced new political ideas and systems of governance, particularly through the influence of Islamic law (Sharia). The integration of Islamic principles into the kingdom's legal and political framework provided the rulers with a new source of legitimacy and authority. As Islamic rulers, the kings of Zazzau were able to present themselves as defenders of the faith, thereby garnering support from both the local population and the wider Islamic world.[52] The adoption of Islamic law helped centralize authority under the king and established a more structured legal system, which was enforced by Islamic judges, or *Qadis* (*Alkalai)*, alongside the scholarly traditional *Sarauta* titles of the imams of *Juman* Zazzau, the *Liman Kona* of Zazzau, the *Na'ibin* Zazzau, the *Sarkin Ladanan Zazzau*, the *Alkalin Garkan* Zazzau, the *Salanken* Zazzau, the *Magatakardan* Zazzau and the *Magajin Malam of Zazzau*.[53] This legal system helped to maintain social order and ensured the smooth administration of justice within the kingdom. Furthermore, Islamic governance fostered ties with other Muslim kingdoms in the region, allowing Zazzau to participate in the broader political and economic networks of the Sahel and the trans-Saharan trade routes.[54]

The Kingdom of Zazzau's political control over key trade routes was another factor that contributed to its establishment. Zazzau's strategic location at the crossroads of several important trans-Saharan trade routes allowed the kingdom to exert influence over regional trade, particularly the lucrative trade in salt, slaves, and textiles. By controlling these trade routes, the kingdom was able to generate significant revenue, which was used to support the political and military infrastructure of the state.[55] The political importance of trade in Zazzau cannot be overstated, as it provided the resources needed for the kingdom to maintain its military strength, administer its territories, and expand its influence. The wealth generated from trade allowed the king and his

[49] A., Smith, *The Early States of the Central Sudan*. Longman, 1971. . 278.
[50] E., Isichei, *A History of Nigeria*. Longman, 1983. P. 220.
[51] J., S., Hogendorn, "Slave Acquisition and Delivery in Precolonial Hausaland." In: B.K, Swartz and E. Raymond eds., *West African Culture Dynamics: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives*, pp. 477–494. See also S., A., Balugum, "*History of Islam Up To 1800 in Groundwork of Nigerian History"* edited by Obaro Ikime, Heinemann Educational Books. Nigeria, 1980. Pp 210 – 225; U., Dalhatu, *Mal. Ja'afaru Dan Isiyaku The Greatest Emir of Zazzau*, Wood Packer Communication Ltd., Zaria Nigeria. Pp. 25 – 33; I., Doi Abdurrahman, *Islam in Nigeria*, published and printed by Gaskiya Corporation Ltd. Zaria, Kaduna State Nigeria, 1984 and A., Smith, Some Notes on the History of Zazzau Under Hausa King, *in Zaria and Its Region*, Edited M., J., Motimore, Department of Geography , Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Occasional Paper No. 4, Nigeria, 1970. Pp 82 – 101.
[52] J., O., Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire: Al-Sa'di's Ta'rikh al-Sudan Down to 1613 and Other Contemporary Documents*. Brill, 1999. See also M., G., Smith, *Government in Zazzau 1800 – 1900*, International African Institute, Oxford University Press, 1960. P. 75; A., Smith, Some Notes on the History of Zazzau Under Hausa King, *in Zaria and Its Region*, Edited M., J., Motimore, Department of Geography , Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Occasional Paper No. 4, Nigeria, 1970. Pp 82 – 101; A., Mahadi, *The Choice of Zaria as the Seat of Higher Learning in the North*, in the History of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1962 – 1967, ABU Press, Zaria, Nigeria. P. 27; and G., Amale Kwanashie, Y., B., Usman et. al, *The Era of Muhammadu Korau, Muhammad Rababua & Muhammad Rumfa* in *A Little New Light Selected Historical Writings of Professor Abdullahi Smith*, the Abdullahi Smith Centre for Historical Research Zaria, Nigeria 1987, pp. 108 – 227.
[53] A.M. Fagachi, *Historical Origin of the Traditional Titles and Culture of Zazzau Emirate*, Sankore Educational Publishers Limited Zaria-Kaduna State, Nigeria, 2015. Pp. 32 – 33.
[54] J., S, Hogendorn, *The Slave Trade in the Central Sudan: An Economic Study of Slavery in the Central Sudan in the 19th Century*. Oxford University Press, 1966. P…; See also A., Smith, Some Notes on the History of Zazzau Under Hausa King, *in Zaria and Its Region*, Edited M., J., Motimore, 1970. P. 201.
[55] P., E., Lovejoy, "The Role of the Wangara in the Economic Transformation of the Central Sudan in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries." *The Journal of African History*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1971, pp. 581–600. See also A., Smith, Some Notes on the History of Zazzau Under Hausa King, *in Zaria and Its Region*, Edited M., J., Motimore, 1970. P. 210.

court to maintain a luxurious lifestyle, which in turn reinforced their political authority and legitimacy among the population. The establishment and development of the Kingdom of Zazzau between 1492 and 1808 AD were shaped by several political factors, including the creation of a centralized political system through the *Sarauta* structure, military expansion, strategic alliances, and the adoption of Islamic governance. These political factors enabled Zazzau to maintain control over its territories, project its influence beyond its borders, and integrate into the wider networks of trade and diplomacy in the West African and Islamic worlds.

Conclusion

The establishment and development of the Kingdom of Zazzau between 1492 and 1808 were products of a strategically integrated system of economic strength, social cohesion, and political organization. Its fertile land and strategic location positioned Zazzau as a key player in local and trans-Saharan trade, while the kingdom's robust taxation, slave-based economy, and artisan industries reinforced its wealth and sustainability. Socially, the ability to integrate diverse ethnic groups into a unified society under shared cultural and religious practices provided internal harmony and identity. Politically, the Sarauta system offered centralized leadership supported by dynastic continuity, military strength, and religious legitimacy through Islam. Together, these factors enabled Zazzau not only to sustain itself over three centuries but also to project its influence far beyond its core territories. The historical trajectory of Zazzau demonstrates how indigenous African states developed complex administrative systems and integrated into broader economic and cultural networks. Understanding the dynamics behind Zazzau's emergence offers valuable insights into precolonial African governance, interethnic relations, and economic resilience, and it affirms the sophistication and agency of African polities before colonial disruption.

The Role of Women in Peacebuilding in Takum Local Government Area of Taraba State, Nigeria

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Abstract
This study investigates the role of women in peacebuilding in Takum Local Government Area (LGA) of Taraba State, Nigeria. Women have historically played vital but often overlooked roles in conflict resolution, community resilience, and post-conflict reconstruction. Despite their disproportionate suffering during conflicts, their participation in formal peace processes remains minimal due to patriarchal norms, cultural barriers, and institutional exclusion. Drawing on ecofeminist theory and empirical insights, this article explores how women in Takum have contributed to peacebuilding through mediation, community organization, and advocacy. It emphasizes the importance of inclusive peace processes and offers policy recommendations for enhancing women's participation in local and national peacebuilding efforts.

Introduction

Conflict has long been part of human interaction and social evolution. In Africa, and particularly in Nigeria, post-independence periods have witnessed an increase in ethno-religious and communal conflicts Yusuf, O. (2025). Takum LGA, located in Taraba State, is no exception. The region has experienced recurring violence, often rooted in ethnic rivalry, political competition, and resource-based disputes. Women and children are usually the most affected demographics, yet their role in peace-building remains underutilized Abe, T. D., & Agbalajobi, D. T. (2024).

In many African societies, women have traditionally served as caregivers, moral educators, and mediators within their families and communities Asuquo, E. F., & Akpan-Idiok, P. A. (2021). However, these informal contributions have often gone unrecognized in official narratives. According to Anderlini (2007), women globally have been instrumental in informal peace initiatives, although their formal inclusion in peace processes remains minimal. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) recognized the pivotal role women can play in peacebuilding and emphasized their inclusion in peace negotiations, peacekeeping operations, and post-conflict reconstruction Bouri, S. (2024).

However, the translation of this global commitment into localized action remains limited in many parts of Nigeria, including Takum.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts ecofeminist theory, which explores the interconnectedness of environmental degradation and the oppression of women, particularly in conflict-ridden societies Surmajová, P. (2024). Ecofeminism emphasizes the unique role women play in nurturing, caregiving, and community cohesion, making them natural peacebuilders (Mann, 2011). The theory critiques both ecological destruction and patriarchal oppression, advocating for justice that is both gender-sensitive and environmentally sustainable. Ecofeminist perspectives highlight women's capacity for conflict resolution through non-violent, community-oriented strategies that promote social and environmental healing Giacomini, T. (2023).

Study Context: Takum Local Government Area

Takum is an ethnically diverse region comprising the Kuteb, Jukun, Chamba, Tiv, and Ichen ethnic groups (Filibus et'al 2024). This diversity, while culturally enriching, has also made Takum a hotspot for interethnic conflicts, often resulting in violence, displacement, and socio-economic stagnation. Women in Takum are particularly vulnerable during conflicts due to sexual violence, forced displacement, and the loss of economic

security. Despite these challenges, women have also emerged as key actors in mitigating conflicts and fostering reconciliation within their communities Chowdury, R. I. (2019).
Takum has experienced various forms of conflict, including land disputes, political rivalry, and communal violence (Okpa et'al 2023). Women have often been sidelined in formal conflict resolution mechanisms dominated by male traditional leaders and political elites. However, grassroots women's associations, faith-based groups, and market women's unions have actively engaged in peace advocacy and community dialogue (Akpan et'al 2024).

Methodology
This article draws from a broader study that employed qualitative methods, including key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and content analysis of policy documents and academic literature. Primary data was gathered from women leaders, civil society organizations, and community elders in Takum LGA, while secondary data was sourced from journal articles, NGO reports, and government publications. The study relied on purposive sampling to select respondents with direct experience in community peace-building, including local activists, religious leaders, and members of women's associations.

Findings and Discussion
Women as Mediators and Community Organizers
Women in Takum have used traditional and informal platforms to mediate disputes between warring groups Kamm (2020). Many of them serve as bridge builders, leveraging their maternal roles and social networks to de-escalate tensions. Women often convene community meetings, inter-ethnic dialogues, and prayer vigils aimed at promoting peace. They also act as trusted intermediaries in restoring communication between conflicting parties Thure, A. M. (2019).
In times of crisis, women mobilize resources to provide food, shelter, and emotional support to displaced families (Seff et'al 2024). This humanitarian role has reinforced their moral authority and legitimacy as peace actors. This aligns with findings from Porter (2003), who observed that women's inclusion leads to more comprehensive and enduring peace agreements.

Cultural and Institutional Barriers
Despite their involvement, women are rarely recognized as key stakeholders in formal peace-building. Patriarchal norms, low education levels, and lack of economic empowerment inhibit their full participation Kaol, L. A. (2020). Traditional gender roles often confine women to the private sphere, while public leadership is reserved for men. Bouta et al. (2005) observed that women's exclusion is often justified through cultural arguments that undermine their capacities and silence their voices in public forums.
Post-conflict Reconstruction and Healing
Women have contributed to post-conflict rebuilding by organizing relief efforts, facilitating trauma healing, and supporting education for orphans Msonge, C. Z. (2022). Their actions have helped rebuild social trust and community cohesion — a critical component of sustainable peace. Women have also supported agricultural recovery programs and micro-enterprise initiatives that provide livelihoods for families affected by conflict King'ong'o, G. W. (2022).

Women's Organizations and Collective Action
In Takum, various women-led groups have emerged as powerful agents of change. Organizations such as the Takum Women Peace Network and the Interfaith Women for Peace have collaborated with NGOs and local authorities to organize peace rallies, training workshops, and conflict resolution forums Saf, M. (2019). These collective efforts demonstrate that women, when organized, can exert significant influence on community dynamics and policy implementation.

Policy and Practical Implications
The findings underscore the undervalued but essential role of women in peacebuilding in Takum. Their contributions remain largely informal and under-documented. Inclusive peacebuilding that involves women not only reflects social justice but enhances the legitimacy and sustainability of the process (UN Women, 2015). Policymakers must recognize that peace cannot be achieved without the active participation of all stakeholders, particularly those who bear the brunt of conflict.
Furthermore, the adoption of UNSCR 1325 in Nigeria and the development of the National Action Plan (NAP) in 2013 offer a policy framework that, if implemented effectively, can institutionalize women's roles in peace

and security. Local governments should ensure that these frameworks are domesticated and operationalized through community-level action plans.

Conclusion

Women in Takum have consistently demonstrated resilience, leadership, and commitment to peace, despite facing systemic barriers. Recognizing and integrating their contributions into formal peacebuilding processes is not only a matter of justice but a strategic imperative for achieving sustainable peace in Nigeria. A gender-inclusive approach to peacebuilding that aligns with global standards and local realities holds the potential to transform conflict-ridden communities into bastions of coexistence and development. The future of peace in Nigeria depends on the empowerment and full participation of women at all levels of society.

Recommendations

1. **Formal Recognition**: Women's informal roles should be formally recognized through community-based structures and local government peace committees.
2. **Capacity Building**: Provide education, training, and resources for women to participate in peace negotiations and political processes.
3. **Legislative Enforcement**: Implement Nigeria's National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 at the local level, especially in conflict-prone areas like Takum.
4. **Partnership with NGOs**: Strengthen collaboration between women's groups and civil society organizations for effective advocacy and resource mobilization.
5. **Gender-sensitive Peace Education**: Integrate peace and gender education in schools and community programs to reshape societal attitudes.
6. **Media and Public Awareness**: Promote stories and narratives of women peacebuilders through local media to shift perceptions and increase visibility.

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Dynamics of Partition and Unification in Historical Perspective: Case of Sudan and South Sudan

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Abstract
July 9th marks the anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of South Sudan, the 54th member state of the African Union. The partition of Sudan into two States followed a January 2011 referendum in which 98.8% of southern Sudanese voted for independence. The referendum was part of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that officially ended a twenty-year war between the central government in Khartoum and the South-based Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM). This partition raises a number of questions: how should the break-up of Sudan be understood, and what is the current state of relations between the two Sudanese States? Should the break-up be seen as the first time an African State disintegrated in the postcolonial era? Was it the inevitable outcome of a cultural clash between a Muslim "Arab" North and a Christian-animist "African" South?
Keywords: Arabization, Egypt, Islamization, Sudan, South Sudan.

Introduction

Sudan's partition can be better understood by locating its roots in colonial history, focusing on a specific episode of the mid-20th century (when two Sudans became one) that curiously mirrors the current situation (one Sudan becoming two). In essence, British policies of separation between the North and the South, followed by northern attempts at forceful Arabization and Islamization of the South, set the stage for the failure of the unified Sudanese State that was established in 1956.

The 2011 secession of South Sudan is often viewed as a direct consequence of the longest civil war experienced on the African continent in the postcolonial era. Indeed, from the moment of its establishment, Sudan was plagued by successive civil wars (1955-1972/1983-2005) that claimed millions of lives and displaced even larger numbers of people from their home areas.[i] The 2011 political split between the North and the South ensued from the ongoing conflict between Khartoum's ruling elites and the southern rebel movements. The former stressed the "Arab" and Islamic identity of Sudan, while the latter, depending on the time period and leadership, advocated either regional autonomy for the South or cultural pluralism in a unitary State.[ii] For decades, these actors have been engaged in a military struggle over the cultural basis of the Sudanese State, political power and representation, the distribution of economic resources, and the provision of social services. However, partition should not be seen retrospectively as an inevitable outcome of Sudan's postcolonial civil wars. Current trends in Sudanese politics are grounded in older realities and policies going back to colonial—and even "pre-colonial"—times.

Historical Background

Sudan in its pre-2011 borders has a relatively short yet extremely volatile history as a political unit. Until the early 20th century the areas covered by current-day Sudan and South Sudan were never united in a single administrative unit. The Ottoman-Egyptian rulers of Sudan (1821-1885) had incorporated parts of the South into their polity, but these conquests occurred at a late stage—just ten years before the Ottoman-Egyptian authorities were evicted by the Sudanese Mahdist movement in 1885. Under the Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad and his successor, the Khalifa Abdullahi, the Mahdist State (1885-1898) extended towards the southern region of Bahr al-Ghazal but never included the whole of the South. Only after the occupation of the country by Anglo-Egyptian troops (1899) were the North and the South formally assembled into what came to be known as the "Anglo-Egyptian Sudan". The new entity's population was nominally governed by a joint Anglo-Egyptian administration during the following fifty years, the Condominium era (1899-1956). In practice, the British monopolized the highest administrative positions and retained all decision-making powers. Egyptian nationalists, for their part, championed the principle of the "unity of the Nile Valley" and claimed sovereignty rights over Sudan until the fall of the Egyptian monarchy in 1952.[iii]

The Southern Policy

During most of the colonial period, the British did not govern one Sudan but rather two: the North and the South. Hence, despite the international recognition of a territorial unit called "Sudan" or "Anglo-Egyptian Sudan," British policies strengthened the idea and the reality of two separate Sudans. Why did the British administer separately the North and the South until 1947? British officials often referred to cultural and religious

differences between a predominantly Arabic-speaking Muslim North and an "animist" and Christian South. In fact, the emphasis on real and imagined differences was closely linked to British attempts to prevent Arabic culture and Islamic values from spreading into southern Sudan, a process that had started unfolding in previous centuries. Thus the British gave a free hand to Christian missionaries in the South while considerably restricting their presence in the North. They also expressed concern for the well-being of southern populations, which they perceived as easy prey for northern "Arab" slave traders.[iv] This preoccupation was connected to the long history of slavery in Sudan, but it was consciously used to legitimize separate rule. In addition, the "Southern Policy" allowed the British to concentrate scarce economic resources in the North while limiting expenditure in what they considered the "barbaric" South. The Southern Policy touched upon various aspects of government and social life. The language of administration was Arabic in the North, English in the South. Whereas a government educational system was gradually developed in the North, education was left to missionaries in the South. The circulation of people and goods between the two areas was severely restricted from 1922 onwards. Southerners were forbidden to bear Arabic names and "mixed" marriages involving northern and southern Sudanese were strongly discouraged.[v]

From Two Sudans to One Sudan

By the early 1940s, the Southern Policy was harshly criticized by the Northern Sudanese intelligentsia and by some British officials. The gap in infrastructures and development between the North and the South was increasingly seen as a problem. In 1945 the British authorities in Khartoum considered three possible options for southern Sudan: unifying it with the North, attaching it to the territories of British East Africa (Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika), or integrating part of it to the North and the rest to East Africa.[vi] The possibility of establishing an independent, separate State in southern Sudan at some point in the future was ruled out on geographical and economic grounds. In addition, the reversal of the Southern Policy was instrumental in British attempts to co-opt northern Sudanese elites against Egyptian ambitions of uniting the Nile Valley. By satisfying one of the main demands of northern Sudanese nationalists (the unification of northern and southern Sudan), the British hoped to gain traction in their political and ideological dispute with the Egyptian government.

Most of the British officials posted in the South opposed the reversal of the Southern Policy, fearing that northern officials would seek to impose their Arab and Islamic culture upon the southern Sudanese. They also condemned the fact that not one single southern representative had been consulted on the unification issue.[vii] In response, on 12-13 June, 1947, the British governors of the three southern provinces, seventeen Southerners, and six Northerners gathered in Juba to discuss the relations between Northern and Southern Sudan. Most of the southern representatives endorsed unification. They nonetheless stressed what they saw as the backwardness of the South compared to the North and expressed worries about the prospect of being dominated by their northern neighbours.[viii] The Juba conference stirred a political and historiographical controversy in the postcolonial era: Northern scholars sought to legitimize the Sudanese unitary State by claiming that the Southerners had expressed full support for unification in 1947.[ix] Southern politicians and historians, for their part, claimed that unification had already been decided before the conference and that it would have been carried out even had the southern representatives voiced disapproval. Another argument was that the southern leaders expressed support for unification only after they had been threatened or blackmailed by northern participants.[x]

In any case, British authorities in Khartoum proceeded to hastily unify the northern and southern regions. One result was the gradual "Northernization" of southern education from 1949 to the 1960s: Arabic was introduced in southern schools, first as a subject-matter and then as a teaching medium, and northern Sudanese curricula replaced missionary programs. Most missionary schools were nationalized one year after Sudanese independence (1957).[xi] Coupled with the political and economic marginalization of the southern Sudanese,[xii] Arabization and Islamization policies carried out in the South by successive Khartoum governments from 1949 onwards played a critical part in stirring up the civil war that began in 1955. President Jaʿafar Nimeiry's imposition of shariʿa law upon the whole country (1983) and Omar al-Bashir's coup d'état (1989), which brought Hasan al-Turabi's National Islamic Front to power, were turning-points in the second phase of the North-South conflict (1983-2005).

Post-Secession Sudan and Colonial Resonances

The 9 July, 2011 "divorce" between the North and the South is in many ways a reversal of Sudan's political evolution in the last decade of colonial rule (1946-1956), when two Sudans were amalgamated into one political unit. Sudan's current division into two States suggests the need for reimagining the "national" history of each country. Until 2011 Sudanese historiography was broadly divided along northern and southern interpretations. Whereas northerners portrayed Britain's Southern Policy as a central cause of the Sudanese civil wars (it "stopped" the historical process of Arabization in the South and prevented the emergence of an all-Sudanese

national identity), southerners often blamed the British for giving it up too hastily, "surrendering" southern Sudan to northern political elites. As one Japanese scholar has pointed out, concepts such as "Sudan," "Sudanese nation," and "Sudanese history" need to be rethought by both academics and citizens.[xiii]

On a more practical level, the viability of the Sudans as two independent States depends not so much on historical precedents of "one" or "two" Sudans, but on the ability of their leaders to solve contentious issues between the two countries and answer urgent needs within each country. Border demarcation, oil sharing, and citizenship/nationality laws are disputed issues that still await solutions.[xiv] Current efforts by the African Union at mediating between Khartoum and Juba may facilitate the implementation of cooperation agreements signed in 2012 by the two countries.[xv]

Conclusion

Bilateral issues should not divert local and international attention from internal problems in each one of the Sudans. To avoid new episodes of secession or implosion in the coming years—especially in Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile and the Eastern Sudan—the ruling elites of both countries will have to address a wide array of issues ranging from security, infrastructures, social services, and employment to the regional distribution of resources, political representation of various groups, and individual liberties.[xvi] The successful fostering of inclusive national identities—or at least allegiances—in each Sudan will require the broader society in Sudan and South Sudan to turn to pluralistic models and give up exclusivist claims based on ethnicity. Dominant groups such as the riverine self-defined "Arab" ethnic groups in Sudan and the Dinka in South Sudan will have to acknowledge the role of ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities in the history of the region and recognize the place of these minorities in current society.

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[i] Douglas H. Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars* (Oxford: International African Institute & James Currey, 2003): 121

[ii] Both the North and the South are home to a great variety of ethnic, religious and linguistic groups. In the last centuries, Islam and the Arabic language have been dominant in the North but also present in the South. In the North, groups such as the Fūr, the Masālīt, the Zaghāwa and the Beja are Muslims but do not identify themselves as "Arabs". They have their own languages and also use Arabic. Christianity was introduced in the South by European and American missionaries, where it has coexisted with Islam and various local religions. Dozens of languages are spoken in South Sudan, including English, various forms of Arabic, Dinka, Nuer, Bari and Zande.

[iii] Lawrence A. Fabunmi, *The Sudan in Anglo-Egyptian Relations: A Case Study in Power Politics, 1800-1956* (London: Longmans, 1960): 204

[iv] David Sconyers, "Fading Voices: Some Reflections on British Rule in the Sudan," *Sudan Notes and Records*, New Series No. 3 (1999): 68-70

[v] Mohamed Omer Beshir, *The Southern Sudan: Background to Conflict* (London: C. Hurst & Co, 1968): 48-53, 115

[vi] Beshir Mohammed Said, *The Sudan: Crossroads of Africa* (London: The Bodley Head, 1965): 30

[vii] Beshir, *The Southern Sudan*, pp. 122-135

[viii] Beshir, *The Southern Sudan*, pp. 136-153

[ix] Abd al-Rahim, "The Development of British Policy," p. 244

[x] Deng D. Akol Ruay, *The Politics of Two Sudans: The South and the North 1821-1969* (Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1994): 52-53

[xi] Ministry of Education, *Proposals for the Expansion and Improvement of the Educational System in the Southern Provinces, 1951-56* (Khartoum: McCorquodale & Co., 1950): 3

[xii] Until 1948, southern civil servants earned lower wages than their northern counterparts. No southerner was invited to the Cairo discussions between the Sudanese political parties and the Egyptian government (1952-1953), which paved the way for Sudanese self-determination. Moreover, the southern Sudanese obtained only six out of the 800 administrative posts that were "Sudanized" in 1954.

[xiii] Yoshiko Kurita, "Rethinking the Role of Historiography in Sudan at the Time of Crisis: The Deconstruction and Reconstruction of 'Sudanese History,'" Paper presented at the International Summer School on Sudanese Studies, Khartoum, University of Khartoum, October 2011

[xiv] Bronwen Manby, *The Right to a Nationality and the Secession of South Sudan: A Commentary on the Impact of the New Laws*, The Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa, 2 July, 2012, http://www.afrimap.org/english/images/report/OSIEA-AfriMAP-Nationality-Sudans-full-EN.pdf (Accessed on 10 September, 2023)

[xv] "Sudan Formally Accepts AU Mediation Proposal to Defuse Tensions with Juba," *Sudan Tribune*, 16 June, 2013, http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article46978 (Accessed on 10 February, 2024)

[xvi] "Opposition Party Says Sudan's NCP Using Poverty & Unemployment as Weapons against People," *Sudan Tribune*, 10 March, 2013, http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article45776 (Accessed on 12 September, 2023)